"THE WHITE SLAVE," A STARTLING STORY BY ELEANOR FAIRFAX, NEXT WEEK

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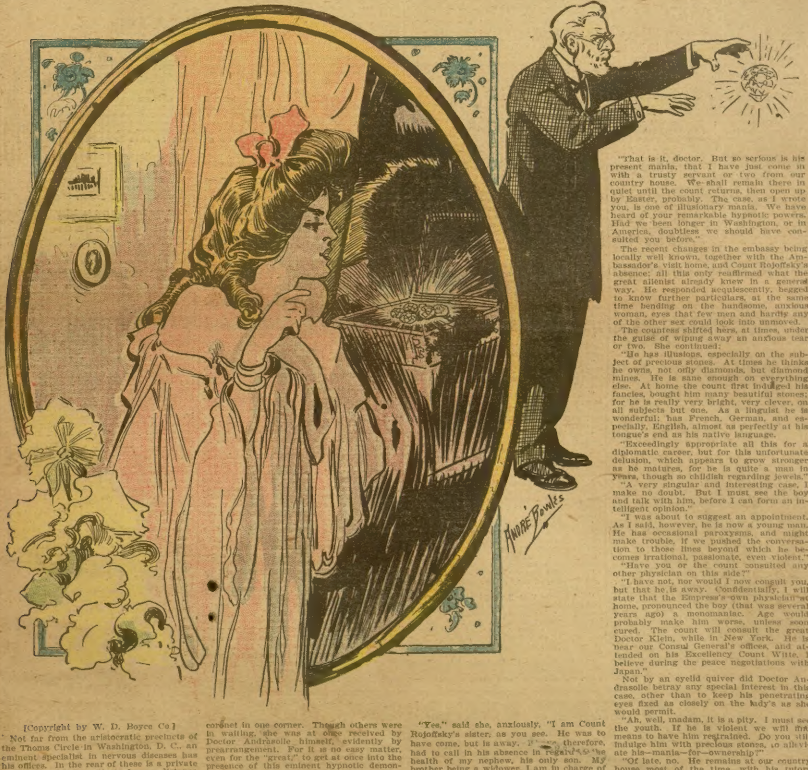
THE DIAMONDS OF THE COUNTESS

By WILLIAM PERRY BROWN.



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Not far from the aristocratic precincts of the Thoms Circle in Washington, D. C., an eminent specialist in nervous diseases has his offices. In the rear of these is a private sanitarium, where patients from a distance may be treated in luxurious privacy; or, placed under restraint in ways accessible to those whose open sesame in this land of liberty is hinged and locked by methods, too often moveable, more by gold, than love or justice.

One bright day before Easter, a covered auto carriage halted before the door. A foreign coat-of-arms was on the panels, and the chaffeur and footman were in livery. A lady descended, entered the reception room, and sent in her card. It bore a coronet in one corner. Though others were in waiting, she was at once received by Doctor Andràsolle himself, evidently by prearrangement. For it is no easy matter, even for the "great," to get at once into the presence of this eminent hypnotic demonstrator of the power of mind over matter in the domain of brain disease.

A gray-haired man of impressive presence, with luminous eyes that seemed to reach the core of things, bowed in a courtly manner, and passing the compliments of the day, offered the lady a chair.

Her card bore the name of a well-known attache of a European embassy, at that time known to be in New York on affairs connected with his chief, then on leave of absence in his native country.

"Yes," said she, anxiously, "I am Count Rojoffsky's sister, as you see. He was to have come, but is away. I [illegible], therefore, had to call in his absence in regard to the health of my nephew, his only son. My brother being a widower, I am in charge of his household; and, especially during his enforced absence, of the health of his son. He is very anxious about him, and would have gone to St. Petersburg with his chief, but for this. Even his business in New York, occasions a stay wherein I am unwilling to longer assume so grave a responsibility undivided."

"I have heard, countess, that your house in town is still closed; owing, I infer, to this, and that the health of your nephew—er——"

"That is it, doctor. But so serious is his present mania, that I have just come in with a trusty servant or two from our country house. We shall remain there in quiet until the count returns, then open up by Easter, probably. The case, as I wrote you, is one of illusionary mania. We have heard of your remarkable hypnotic powers. Had we been longer in Washington, or in America, doubtless we should have consulted you before."

The recent changes in the embassy being locally well known, together with the Ambassador's visit home, and Count Rojoffsky's absence; all this only reaffirmed what the great alienist already knew in a general way. He responded acquiescently, begged to know further particulars, at the same time bending on the handsome, anxious woman, eyes that few men and hardly any of the other sex could look into unmoved.

The countess shifted hers, at times, under the guise of wiping away an anxious tear or two. She continued:

"He has illusions, especially on the subject of precious stones. At times he thinks he owns, not only diamonds, but diamond mines. He is sane enough on everything else. At home the count first indulged his fancies, bought him many beautiful stones; for he is really very bright, very clever, on all subjects but one. As a linguist he is wonderful; has French, German, and especially, English, almost as perfectly at his tongue's end as his native language.

"Exceedingly appropriate all this for a diplomatic career, but for this unfortunate delusion, which appears to grow stronger as he matures, for he is quite a man in years, though so childish regarding jewels."

"A very singular and interesting case, I make no doubt. But I must see the boy and talk with him, before I can form an intelligent opinion."

"I was about to suggest an appointment. As I said, however, he is now a young man. He has occasional paroxysms, and might make trouble, if we pushed the conversation to those lines beyond which he becomes irrational, passionate, even violent."

"Have you or the count consulted any other physician on this side?"

"I have not, nor would I now consult you, but that he is away. Confidentially, I will state that the Empress's own physician at home, pronounced the boy (that was several years ago) a monomaniac. Age would probably make him worse, unless soon cured. The count will consult the great Doctor Klein, while in New York. He is near our Consul General's offices, and attended on his Excellency Count Witte, I believe during the peace negotiations with Japan."

Not by an eyelid quiver did Doctor Andrasolle betray any special interest in this case, other than to keep his penetrating eyes fixed as closely on the lady's as she would permit.

"Ah, well, madam, it is a pity. I must see the youth. If he is violent we will find means to have him restrained. Do you still indulge him with precious stones, to alleviate his—mania—for—ownership?"

"Of late, no. He remains at our country house most of the time, with his tutors and a trained nurse or two. But, if you will make an appointment I will bring him to you; though I would suggest that you have a couple of strong attendants at hand. They may be needed."

"Restraint is the least of my fears. We are always prepared for that. It is a pity, however, that so accomplished a young man as you describe him to be, is thought to be almost hopeless in his brain affection by so high an authority in his own country."

"Should my brother not return at once, I may wish you to take charge of the son, should his interview with you tend to make him violent. I feel quite unequal to the task, I assure you."

"Give yourself no uneasiness. We have every convenience in my sanitarium for just such cases as you describe your nephew's to be; good attendance, strong trained nurses; more than all, he is under my own eye. I feel much interested, and you may be sure that the son of the Count Rojoffsky will have the best of everything in my house. Should he, unfortunately become dangerous, or suicidal, we have the softest of padded rooms, where he could not hurt himself if he would."

"Thank you so much, doctor. You relieve me immensely. When would I best bring him in?"

The physician consulted his engagement book. At the same time an electric bell at his desk clicked, and an attendant handed him a card at the door. Andrasolle tucked it in his pocket.

"Tell the gentleman to kindly wait for me in——" he whispered in the attendants ear, who silently withdrew. "Countess," continued the doctor, "will it be convenient for you to bring your nephew here tonight at eight? I have nearly every minute filled until then."

The lady appeared to ponder anxiously. Then shook her head.

"He is always more irritable at night. Then, he is still at our country house. Won't some hour tomorrow do as well—in the morning, say?"

He again consulted his book, when she suggested, amiably, that he name any time between ten and four. Two was fixed on and the lady, apparently relieved, though still anxious, was handed to the door, with ceremonious civility by the doctor, who then pulled out the card from his pocket and looked at it with a thoughtful air.

It read "William Wetmore, Secret Service, New York. Branch Office, Lincoln Bldg., F. St., N. W., Washington, D. C."

"What can he want with me now, that is so urgent?" Telling the attendant to detain the next visitor in the outer office for a moment, the physician, looking very grave, hastened into another small ante-room, and seemed surprised to find it vacant. Then he saw a note on the little table in a hand that was familiar. It was to himself and read:

"My Dear Doctor: Pardon this unceremonious departure; but I think I am on the verge of a discovery important to us both. Unexpectedly? Yes. But I must follow it up without delay. Will see you later. Mind reader as you are—are you 'on?' One word more. Whether or not any appointment or other stipulation has been made with you by your last caller—let things stand. Phone, or special messenger, my office if it is to occur before I am likely to see you. Do you twig? I am a mind reader, too, oh, wizard! See that you do not prove to be spurious. Yours——"

The hieroglyphic that followed was supposed to be "W. W.," but strongly confirmed the doctor's humorously impugned powers, when he recognized the initials as Wetmore's. What had the noted detective discovered to call him away, just then, of all times?

Surely his old acquaintance might have waited another five minutes. His own office bell clicked sharply. Doctor Andrasolle, whose minutes were golden, hastened back, and in the stream of callers ever besieging his consultation room doors found little leisure, for hours, to give these matters further thought.

* * * * * * * * *

The following day a handsome blond woman of a fine figure and a Russian contour of feature, alighted at the side entrance to one of the Pennsylvania avenue jeweler's shops, and was ushered with profound courtesy into a semi-private office and strong room combined, such as diamond importers often have attached to their stores, for the reception of favored customers and the greater security of their most valued wares.

She was plainly but richly dressed, and in the best of good taste. The young man to whom her crested card had been given by a clerk, bowed low.

"Madam," he said, "I am sorry to disappoint you, but my father is still absent from the city. He may be gone two week. Your wire to him, was sent to me at our Baltimore house, and knowing as you stated, that your business will not admit of delay, I hastened over, reaching here this morning. I am the junior partner, countess, and though we have not dealt personally together before, so old a customer of my father will, I hope, not be disappointed in having to deal with the son."

"This is unfortunate—still——" She hesitated, and seemed uncertain. "Whenever I am in town, I always trade with and through him. He knows my taste in jewels, especially diamonds. Your connection with Ruffany's in New York, assures you of all the latest modes in necklaces,—by the way, sir, I am also interested in a new tiara, for the opening ball, after the President's Easter reception to the Diplomatic Corps next week."

The junior partner was all deference and attention. Though he had not before met the countess, her name was on the firm's books, and he knew the high value attached by his father to her patronage and that of the count, her brother, who in the ambassador's absence, was a most important social as well as political functionary.

"Let me, madam, offer my humble services and judgment in my father's absence. You are one of our privileged patrons. Myself and our whole establishment are—yours, so to speak, to serve and advise."

Such a polite and deferential youth, he was. The fastidious countess would have been less than feminine, or more than human, to resist such adroit flattery. Quite European, even Parisian, it was. She smiled.

"You are very kind, sir. No doubt you will do quite as well, providing you give me the benefit of your skill and talent, as your father does."

"It will be my pride as well as pleasure, to see that you have no reason to regret the change."

"One likes to be original, if possible. What I anticipated, was having a design made. But as your father is away, and the time is short, suppose you now show me what you already have made up; the more striking in design and value, the better."

Accordingly the countess was shown through the entire stock, especially the large assortment of mounted and unmounted gems in the show cases and the safes. But nothing seemed exactly to please her taste. One setting of stones was too large, another too small, a third had an off colored stone too conspicuously placed, and so on. At last she selected several of the finest settings of necklaces and tiaras, worth in the aggregate, perhaps eighty to a hundred thousand dollars.

From these she thought one might be selected, providing certain changes were made as would suit her other diamonds, that would, on so formal an occasion, be also worn. All this, the junior partner, said was a mere matter of detail, that could easily be arranged.

"Well, then, sir," she concluded. "I would like to take these home and try them on with my costume and other jewels, to see what the effect will be. We are just returned from the country, and if your father was here, I know he would allow me to do so, for he has, more than once, done so before. I do not wish, however, to embarrass the son, for I understand your position as a junior partner. Naturally you would deem it too much of a risk to permit me to take home those different designs, but——" again she hesitated, with a pretty air of embarrassment, altogether charming in so distinguished a lady. "You might write to your father—I understand he is in the South, traveling. He would answer, then we would know what to do."

"If I knew his immediate address, I wire, or use the long distance phone. But he is yachting for his health, fishing, in the Gulf. It might be several days before we heard from him, and the time is very short, as your ladyship has said."

He was reflecting, apparently. Though a junior partner, he was very, very young. A pair of wonderful eyes, scarcely less star like than the whitest stones the countess was considering, were also having the usual effect of rank and beauty on youth, when allied to a hope of great gain thereby.

"I would like to grant you this favor, madam," he said. "Nor do I see much risk about it. Is your town house open?"

"Not in a social sense. I am stopping there with my maid and two servants. My brother will join us tomorrow or the day after."

"The very thing, countess. Your carriage is at our side door. If you will permit me to accompany you, I will take these designs, and wait your pleasure at your house while you try them on."

"Nothing is more easy," she assented, and with his assistance, placed the six elaborate tiaras in her reticule.

The young man took his hat, called an assistant to take his place in the strong room, and the couple were soon on their way together. As the stylish auto carriage rolled smoothly over the asphalt, westward, the countess appeared to remember something forgotten, and turned to her companion, with:

"I trust you do not mind my stopping at Doctor Andrasolle's, the eminent nerve and brain specialist. I have arranged for a brief interview at two." She consulted a tiny watch, set with a diamond coronet. "We seem to be just in time."

The junior partner could see no harm in this, but hoped they might not be detained very long.

"Aside from that, I would not mind meeting this noted man, who is so justly celebrated for his attainments in alleviating the diseases of the mind. But, pardon me. Will he not consider my visit with you in the light of an intrusion? His time, I hear, is very much occupied during consultation hours."

"I will arrange all that, my friend," and she smiled on him more bewitchingly than ever. "I will repay one favor with another, as we say in Russia. You do not live here, and the doctor, also, divides his time between Washington, in the winter season, and his European sanitarium near San Remo. Indeed, there was where we first availed ourselves of his skill, when he was treating a brother of our Tzar. I will mention you as a—a nephew, if mention is necessary. Another homely old country saying of ours, 'Let one hand wash another,' should appeal to you now."

Her eyes, now more glorious than ever, as they rested on his, seemed to grow dreamy with remembrance—or, was it something warmer? He was such a very young junior partner, and she his father's most valued patron, or so he believed. Then, gently relapsing into customary small talk usage, she concluded:

"But he is so busy a savant, and sees so very many people, it is of small concern, other than in enabling me to fulfill my appointment. It also gives you a closer view of his truly original manner and ways during a few moments of professional activity that you would otherwise hardly have. He knows I have a nephew, though he never has seen him, nor is likely to."

The junior partner acquiesced; apparently there was nothing else to do; and he even began to wonder if this voluptuous looking, titled sister of a diplomat, had ever entertained the idea of a marriage, an American marriage at that.

With wealth, title, the bluest of Tartar blood on one side and a young, ambitious, not unrich dealer in diamonds on the other——

Luckily, just then the carriage stopped before the door of the great physician. The imposing brown stone front, indicated some palatial residence, more than the disguising frontage of a private mad-house, where money might buy science and luxury, but not always justice.

They were received at once in the physician's private consulting room, and after a questioning look at the junior partner, and an informal mention of his supposed identity as her nephew, the countess dextrously led the conversation into informal, ordinary themes, apparently to give Andrasolle an opportunity to more closely observe his possible patient.

Reticent at first, from natural caution and some social embarrassment, the junior partner was gradually drawn out of his shell, especially by the alienist's dextrously worded suggestions, that might hardly be called questions. The woman, with an artifice not less admirable than the doctor's plausibility, assisted her own deeper purpose, by deceiving both with a skill worthy of a better cause.

They spoke of the weather, the likelihood of an extra session of Congress, the railroad muddle, the post-Easter gayeties, that led to a tentative opinion by the doctor on the probable reduction of customs duty on precious stones, he bending inscrutable eyes on both his visitors. This seemed to remind the junior partner that time was passing, and, after a cursory remark on that impersonal subject, his sense of duty to his father and senior partner asserted itself.

"Pardon me for hurrying you, countess," he added. "But, if you intend trying on those tiaras, ought we not to go—that is, if the object of your visit here is accomplished?"

"Ah, doctor!" The lady raised her eye brows meaningly, and Andrasolle became all attention. "You see how it is."

Upon this pointed hint he began to query the young man more directly on the subject of diamonds. What did he know of diamonds? Was he, the smooth-shaven, boyish, junior partner interested in diamonds?

"Interested! Well, rather. At this moment the Countess Rojoffsky has six of my finest diamond clusters in that satchel she carries——"

"My dear nephew!" exclaimed the lady soothingly. "Why persist in making a personal matter of so impersonal a subject as jewelry?"

The young man consulted his watch, and was surprised that nearly half an hour had passed in what, to him, was irrelevant social chatter. Moreover, he did not half like the pointed tone and the looks assumed by Doctor Andrasolle and his father's distinguished customer. It suggested vague persistence, not to say impertinence, even to a very young junior partner.

"Countess," he said decisively, "while I appreciate the honor you do me, my business is of more importance. The charge I have in your keeping is too grave a responsibility to be longer delayed."

Andrasolle, still seated behind his desk, made a hardly perceptible signal. The room, heavily draped with portieres, behind where the diamond broker stood, vibrated mysteriously. The curtains were gently agitated, then slightly parted, disclosing a man's acquiescent face.

The muffled tread caused the junior partner to rise. He kept his eyes now on the lady and the bag she carelessly held.

"You see, doctor, how he is affected, when precious stones are mentioned. He thinks these clusters which I am taking to Rauch & Company to have reset, really belong to him. He saw me put them in the bag, before we started to see you——"

"Rauch & Company!" Almost shouted the excited youth. "Of course they belong there. It is our house, on——"

"He grows violent, as I told you yesterday, doctor," interrupted the countess, simulating fear and excitement. "Unless he is—unless something is at once done to pacify him, he will attempt something desperate."

Noiselessly two sturdy attendants appeared from behind the curtains, watching their chief, who looked from one of his visitors to the other.

"I begin to see that this is some kind of plot," declared young Rauch warily. "But Doctor Andrasolle is well-known. I should have no difficulty in explaining matters, when I state that I am the son of M. Rauch, one of the largest importers of diamonds outside of Maiden Lane. I have charge of our Baltimore branch. We are also the Washington agents of Ruffany & Company, New York——"

"Is not this lady your aunt?" interrupted Andrasolie, sharply.

"I never saw her before today, personally. My father knows Count Rojoffsky's sister, well. He is away——"

"How did you permit yourself to be introduced here as her nephew, without a protest?"

"How does any man happen to make a fool of himself! It is some kind of a trap, which I do not yet understand. Clever rogues are always inventing new schemes to get our diamonds away. But this is the most diabolical of all; for they are using you—all of men! Unless I can recover my tiara immediately, I must send for the police."

The alienist caught the eye of the countess with a look that seemed to say, "he appears to be a hopeless case." She, simulating fear of further violence, moved a step nearer the physician.

"He really raves," was her verdict. "How grieved the count will be."

"What will he grieve about?" exclaimed the young man, more excited than ever. "Because you have my property in your bag? I will remedy that presently."

"Alas, doctor!" said she. "Must I leave him with you—now?"

She made as if to go, when the junior partner, beside himself with anger at such dangerous imposition, mindful of his great responsibility for the safety of the gems, made as if to seize the bag from her by force.

Andrasolle made a secon sign, and the youth was seized from behind by the two at the curtains and carried off between them, screaming, struggling, fighting for liberty. But they were used to such scenes, and were strangely gentle, though irresistible.

"Let me beg you not to delay longer here, madam," urged the doctor. "These scenes are painful, and when you are gone he will quiet down."

"How can I thank you enough!" she faltered, sinking down into the nearest chair. "Be as lenient as possible with the dear boy. He is my nephew and my brother's only son."

Apparently, the physician was anxious only to terminate the interview, and the countess took her leave, tearfully unsuspicious, and returned to her auto, the bag still in hand.

The day being cloudy and the carriage a closed one, she was already inside when she saw a shadowy form in a top coat and high silk hat, occupying the corner just vacated by the junior partner. Firm, clean-shaven jaws, obtrusive chin, alert eyes suggesting, somehow, the dart of lunging steel, confronted her, dismayed her. She fairly gasped. Then her own eyes gleamed, though not now with tears.

"Well, Sophy," said Wetmore, nonchalently, for it was the detective, "is not this rather an uppish role, even for you, after the swathe you cut in St. Louis, two years ago?"

She would have cast herself through the glass of the door, as the auto moved off, but was restrained, the bag being wrenched dextrously from her grasp, with an accompanying sound of snapping steel. Plain clothes detectives appeared on the auto steps. Already chauffeur and footman were under other control.

"Will you be quiet, or must I use these?" Meaning the handcuffs. "It's all up. We have had you shadowed since your visit to Andrasolle's yesterday. The doctor read you; I knew you at once, and young Rauch knows you, by now. One thing you seem to have overlooked, Sophy. I wonder at you. You mentioned Doctor Klein, of New York. I live in New York. Doctor Andrasolle and he are old friends. Naturally he thought of the long distance telephone——"

"You—you—how could you know?" she finally allowed herself to say, though already lapsing into the sullen silence of the habitual criminal when hopelessly and unexpectedly caught "with the goods."

"Easy, enough, Sophy. I visited Andrasolle yesterday on other business. I heard you, saw you, recognized you. Meanwhile the doctor exercising some of his skill as a mind reader, formed confirmatory ideas. You are wanted in St. Louis; more badly wanted in Chicago. Therefore, to get hold of you good, and hard, and fast—why not let you run your pretty head through the noose you seemed determined to wear, any how. Savez now, my dear?"

If looks could have stabbed, Wetmore would not have left that auto alive. Still he seemed puzzled on one point.

"As a confidence artist, a first rater, and high plunger, you have proved your grade and tested our metal. But how you so nearly succeeded in this role, right here amid that Washington social holy of holies, the diplomatic corps, still"—he regarded her meditatively—"puzzles me a little bit."

The auto carriage stopped in front of the police station.

"So far as I am concerned," said the sullen beauty, "the puzzle may remain." A file of blue coats surrounded the carriage.

"As you will Sophy." He picked up the bag containing the tiaras. "With you or without you, it will be solved."

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* * *

There is but a word more. The following day in the captain's private office, to several persons gathered there, a woman and two men were introduced from the cell-room. The first was the Count Rojoffsky; the real countess, his sister; the son, still wearing knee-pants, young Rauch the "junior partner," quite serene again at sight of an open bag on the table containing the six diamond clusters. Doctor Klein of New York City, Doctor Andrasolle, and a couple of plain-clothes men that looked much like the attendants who so firmly, yet gently, conveyed the still mystified junior partner from his bag of diamonds, in the remote interests of justice all round.

"Do you know this woman, count?" queried Wetmore, coming in with a telegram in his hand. "And do you, also, countess?"

Both stated that she had for several months been employed at their residence near the city, as the countess' maid. The men were also recently employed servants, seemingly strangers to each other and the maid, who, being Russian, had grown rapidly in her mistress's confidence. Had, in fact, been left in charge of their rural establishment, during the family's visit to New York to consult the eminent Doctor Klein in behalf of the count's son, who had been mentally ill, but was now nearly well.

"I told you, Sophy," said Wetmore with a grim smile, "that with your aid or without it, your riddle would be solved. This statement of the count and his sister explains your familiarity with their dealings with the senior partner of Rauch & Company. His absence, and the visit of your employers to my home place, New York, allowed you to work your game with the junior partner, summoned by you in the countess' name from his Baltimore store. Your husband, being a chauffeur, and Slick Nick, his cousin, having exceptional calves for liveried legs, it was a handy refuge all round, seeing how badly this message states you are needed in Chicago."

The real countess seemed petrified at this graphic resume of the records, of the vipers the noble house of Rojoffsky had been warming, so to say, at their own fireside.

"Who are these people, then?" she at length summoned nerve to ask.

"The men are most dangerous counterfeiters. Joliet and Jefferson City has needed them for years; unexpired sentences, you see. As for Sophy, here——"

"I thought her name was Nadege Vassevna——"

"Countess, call it plain Sophy Fliegblatt and her husband. He is, or was, your chauffeur. The other one, Slick Nick, or Nicholas——"

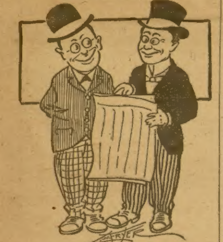
The real countess screamed slightly. Wetmore turned and gave his telegram to the captain. Then to the junior partner, he said:

"I trust you found the stones intact, and that you now see aright the need and double object of Doctor Andrasolle and myself permitting this woman to irremediably entrap herself and her pals, even though it has inconvenienced to some extent so good a man as yourself."

They shook hands, while the prisoners were returned to the cells.

The incident was closed.

The end.



"Bromly, here's an account of a woman who lived forty-eight days on water."

"That's nothing, Darranger. My father has been living on water for the last ten years."

"You expect me to believe that, eh? Why don't you add that he grew fat on it?"

"Well, he did. He's a sea captain."

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THE RANCHMAN'S WIFE.

BY BERRY SHARPE.

Major Alfred Dunning was a Kentuckian, from Louisville. For five years, after graduation, he had displayed a lawyer's shingle on one of the principal thoroughfares of the city just named, but his success was not encouraging. The few cases he obtained did not offer him much more money than was required to pay the rent of his offices.

He stored his books, disposed of his few articles of office furniture, went to California, and there bought a ranch, chiefly devoted to the culture of the grape.

The major's success in this enterprise was not all what he had anticipated. For three years he did fairly well; then his little mountain vineyard suffered deplorably from the ravages of phylloxera, and he was living on the uncertain promise of a number of green shoots, called euphoniously "the olive-orchard."

But the major was not unhappy. When he was not tilling the soil he sat on a little veranda, with his brierwood pipe between his teeth, and studied tne long, narrow, picturesque Napa Valley far below.

It may be that the major's failure to succeed in the grape business was not the fault of the country, but that his genial, unpractical nature was the true obstacle to success. The major was, in fact, the most helpless agriculturist who ever went to California to improve his condition. The poor fellow became so convinced of this after a short trial that he engaged a man to act as servant and general household factotum. The major was a solitary bachelor then. The gods alone knew in what unpropitious moment he picked up Pete, to hang about his neck a millstone of inefficiency. Pete's poverty must have been his recommendation, and the major's poverty the excuse for keeping him. Pete had about as much knowledge of household work as the major had of running a ranch.

Four years passed, and then at the age of thirty-five the major married Christobel Bauer, a pretty San Francisco girl. Pete was at once displaced as household servant, and promoted to be manager of the ranch, and expended his grooming talents on the pet mule.

The major's wife was "artistic." She had studied sketching and did some really clever bits of work. Her admiring husband was sure that she was a born artist, and consequently much time was devoted to art and little time to ranching.

But this was not without protest from one individual. Not that he was disturbed by lack of work, but poor Pete was oftener than not the unwilling model for Christobel's clever studies.

After Pete had posed for a score or more indifferent works of art without names, he began to think of deserting his employer and leaving him to a just and awful fate. But this stupendous blow was averted by the arrival of Chester Edwards, a young man of twenty-five, who had come from New Albany, Indiana, to learn practical ranching under the direction of his father's old friend, the major.

After a week had been given up to driving his protege about the valley and introducing him to his friends in the immediate neighborhood, the major returned to his daily routine of pruning olive-trees and digging out worm-eaten grapevines. Christobel soon discovered in the young man's clean-cut features and fine athletic figure an entirely new field for art-study, and Edwards found the time pass more pleasantly as a model than as an embryo rancher. They were together most of the daylight hours.

When Edwards was not posing for a California miner, or a Greek hero, he was sitting very close to Christobel, criticizing, in soft, caressing tones, the sketches of himself which she had been making. Without actually straying from the path of duty, Christobel was treading on dangerously uncertain territory. She quite frankly admitted to herself that she was pretty and charming, and, being of that mind, she did not repress comparisions between her husband and the young man.

Matters had arrived at a state where a warm-hearted, but vain, young woman needed a friend with the strength to hold up a good powerful, unflattering mirror for her to gaze into. Pete could have held up the mirror with right good will, but he did not know how. In these days he followed the major with dog-like devotion, and only glowered when the mistress came out to the apple-orchard one morning with her paints, attended by Chester Edwards. Her husband warned her of the danger of going so far from the house, and gave her an affectionate scolding for her imprudence.

She held her head very high and stiff, and, still attended by Edwards, marched over the hill some distance away, where she seated herself and pretended to sketch, but was in reality nursing her injured feelings to keep them alive. The major watched them disappear with a pained expression on his good-natured face, and then went dejectedly into the house. Pete was deeply incensed against his mistress. To him it was quite apparent that she was becoming quite fond of the society of his master's guest, and Pete made another solemn vow to desert the ranch. It was the ninety-and-ninth time that he had done so, and this time he sealed the vow with an oath.

The long grass on the Napa hills was dry and crisp, and Christobel was daubing yellow ocher and burned umber on her canvas with vicious strokes. She was not giving any attention to her work, however, for an athletic form stood between her and the landscape, and she was indulging in a very foolish day-dream. To do the little woman justice, she was not in love with Edwards, but her vanity had been stimulated to such wonderful activity by his youthful gallantries that she fancied he was deeply infatuated with her. She wondered if he would ever tell her that he loved her. If she could only have some test of his love, what a satisfaction it would be!

* * *

Over on the mountainside, a half-mile away, Pete leaned on his horse and watched a thread of fire crawling like a red snake through the underbrush of chaparral and manzanita. He knew only too well that no human power could stop it, and that within a few minutes the gentle breeze would cause a flying spark to fall upon the long dry grass, and—puff!—the crawling snake would become a great, swirling, galloping mass of flame and smoke, and would pass over the very place where the rancher's wife sat sulking and dreaming.

An ominous and dreaded sound reached his ear at that very moment. In alarm he turned his head, and saw within two hundred yards of him that the grass was a living sea of flame!

Pete made a dash for the house, yelling at the top of his lungs for the major.

The volume of smoke was rising high when Christobel rose to her feet and breathed the stifling air. Before she could gather up her paints, a thin rim of fire ran along the top of the little hill above her. The small birds and insects rose from the ground with a whirr and scattered down the hillside. Christobel glanced backward, and saw the fire licking up the grass as it bore down upon her, and the smoke rolling heavenward in dense clouds.

She did not lose her presence of mind, but remembered a small plowed field a short distance away where the flames could not reach her, and ran nimbly down the hill, with her fluttering skirts gathereing burs as she sped.

When she was fairly on the plowed ground and gasping for breath, she saw her husband's guest tearing along the hill at a frantic rate. Through the smoke he looked pale and frightened.

The ranchman's wife felt a thrill of satisfaction, here was the longed-for proof of Chester Edwards' love; he thought she was in danger and had come to her rescue. A deep blush mounted to her cheeks, and her heart beat passionately. But Edwards did not seem to see her. It was evident to her that he was crazed with fear and would plunge into the fire in search of her. Merciful Heaven! he would be burned.

"Chester!" she screamed; "dear Chester, I am here, safe!"

The fire was very close, and she had to throw herself flat upon the ground to escape the whirling sparks. She gave one more despairing cry as she felt the hot breath scorch her clothing.

"Chester! Chester! Chester!"

A great wave of flame and smoke swept round the edge of the plowed ground, and for a minute nothing could be seen or heard. Fortunately for the ranchman's wife, the dry grass burned like tinder, and was soon consumed up to the edge of the plowed field. Personally she was comparatively safe, as the fire had passed from her immediate vicinity, and was now roaring down the hill toward the valley.

When Christobel, choked and frightened, lifted her head, she saw the long limbs of her husband bounding over the blackened earth toward her. His duck trousers were smeared with soot, and he had a wet blanket about his shoulders. He could not speak, but caught Christobel in his arms, and burst into stifled sobs.

Behind them was heard the voice of Chester Edwards.

"Hello, there, major!" he cried. "I had a very narrow squeak of it. My hammock and books are burned to tinder by this time. By Jove, old fellow, you are burned yourself, aren't you? Your wife was safe enough. I knew she could take care of herself."

But the ranchman's wife buried her head in the wet blanket with a shudder and burst into tears of shame and contrition.

"Well, well," gasped Pete, who had stumbled up the hill with a bundle of wet sacks, "I never was so scared in my life. Thought you'd be burned sure, Mrs. Dunning. Me an' the major will have a fine time next week clearing."

For Pete had reconsidered his ninety-and-ninth vow. Indeed, it was only a week later when he was speculating if there was ever a happier couple than the ranchman and his wife. And Pete beamed as he thought of the ignoble part Chester Edwards played on the day of the fire.

From that day the guest noticed a marked coolness in Mrs. Dunning, and a desire to avoid him. It was not long, therefore, before Edwards decided that he had lost the esteem of the ranchman's wife, and he soon announced his intention to return to his Eastern home.

Ups and Downs.

The following story is accredited to Miss Phyllis Rankin, who in privte life is Mrs. Harry Davenport:

"My hubband and I went into a Broadway umbrella store a few days ago," says Miss Rankin. "A sign reading 'Umbrellas, $1 up,' was displayed in the window.

"'How much down?' asked Mr. Davenport.

"The salesman looked a bit perplexed. 'We have them for $1 up,' he said.

"'I know,' replied Mr. Davenport, 'but I don't want to buy one up. I want to buy one down. I can put it up myself.'

"'O,' said the salesman, smiling gently, 'you are speaking of the umbrella, while I am speaking of the price.'

"'And now I undertand, too,' returned Mr. Davenport, 'it is the price that is $1 up. Then it isn't exactly $1 down as you said?'

"'Exactly. But perhaps you would like to talk with the proprietor.'

"The salesman hurried to the rear of the store, and I overheard him explaining to his employer; also I heard remarks about an insane asylum. The proprietor came blandly forward and said, 'We storekeepers have our ups and downs, but—' At this we bought an umbrella and fled."

His Ability.

"I don't want you to go out rowing along with that young man again."

"Why, ma, there isn't a bit of danger. He can swim like a fish."

"Yes, and he seems to be able to bend so far that he can sit in the middle seat and kiss a girl no matter which end of the boat she occupies."

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The "Yell-Oh" Man

And One of His Ways.

To call a man a liar seems rude, so we will let the reader select his own term.

Sometime ago the Manager of "Collier's Weekly" got very cross with us because we would not continue to advertise in his paper.

We have occasionally been attacked by editors who have tried to force us to advertise in their papers at their own prices, and, on their own conditions, failing in which we were to be attacked through their editorial columns. The reader can fit a name to that tribe.

We had understood that the editor of "Collier's" was a wild cat of the Sinclair "jungle bungle" type, a person with curdled gray matter, but it seems strange that the owners would descend to using their editorial columns, yellow as they are, for such rank out and out falsehoods as appear in their issue of July 27th, where the editor goes out of his way to attack us, and the reason will appear tolerably clear to any reader who understands the venom behind it.

We quote in part as follows:—"One widely circulated paragraph labors to induce the impression that Grape-Nuts will obviate the necessity of an operation in appendicitis. This is lying, and, potentially, deadly lying. Similarly, Postum continually makes reference to the endorsements of 'a distinguished physician' or 'a prominent health official' persons as mythical doubtless, as they are mysterious."

We do not hesitate to reproduce these mendacious falsehoods in order that it may be made clear to the public what the facts are, and to nail the liar up so that people may have a look at him. If this poor clown knew what produced appendicitis, he might have some knowledge of why the use of Grape-Nuts would prevent it. Let it be understood that appendicitis results from long continued disturbance in the intestines, caused primarily by undigested food, and chiefly by undigested starchy food, such as white bread, potatoes, rice, partly cooked cereals, and such. These lie in the warmth and moisture of the bowels in an undigested state, and decay, generating gases, and irritating the mucous surfaces until, under such conditions, the lower part of the colon and the appendix become involved. Disease sets up, and frequently, of a form known as appendicitis.

Now then, Grape-Nuts food was made by Mr. C. W. Post, after he had an attack of appendicitis, and required some food in which the starch was predigested. No such food existed; from his knowledge of dietetics he perfected the food; made it primarily for his own use, and afterwards introduced it to the public. In this food the starch is transformed by moisture and long-time cooking into a form of sugar, which is easily digested and does not decay in the intestines. It is a practical certainty that when a man has approaching symptoms of appendicitis, the attack can be avoided by discontinuing all food except Grape-Nuts, and by properly washing out the intestines. Most physicians are now acquainted with the facts, and will verify the statement.

Of course, this is all news, and should be an education to the person who writes the editorials for "Collier's," and who should take at least some training before he undertakes to write for the public.

Now as to the references to "a distinguished physician" or "a prominent health official" being "mythical persons." We are here to wager "Collier's Weekly," or any other skeptic or liar, any amount of money they care to name, and which they will cover, that we will produce proof to any Board of Investigators that we have never yet published an advertisement announcing the opinion of a prominent physician or health official on Postum or Grape-Nuts, when we did not have the actual letter in our possession. It can be easily understood that many prominent physicians dislike to have their names made public in reference to any article whatsoever; they have their own reasons, and we respect those reasons, but we never make mention of endorsements unless we have the actual endorsement, and that statement we will back with any amount of money called for.

When a journal wilfully prostitutes its columns, to try and harm a reputable manufacturer in an effort to force him to advertise, it is time the public knew the facts. The owner or editor of "Collier's Weekly" cannot force money from us by such methods.

POSTUM CEREAL CO., Ltd.

THE MOSS MILL MYSTERY;

Or, The Lady of the Stair.

By MAJOR ALBION F. GRANT.

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CHAPTER V.

I ENCOUNTER MR. PHIDIAS GLENN.

"Well," exclaimed Gorgon Lake, town marshal of Moss Mill, as he entered my room the afternoon after the finding of the coroner's jury. "Well, this beats my time. In all my experience I never saw anything just like it."

"You refer to the finding, I suppose?"

"That's it. Here are two men each of whom confesses to the murder of Miss Marigold, and it's a cinch that but one is guilty. They listen to the statements of both men, which I am not so sure they had a right to do, and find that the lady came to her death at the hands of her nephew, Gaston Bland."

"Well?"

I looked over my cigar at the marshal and waited for him to proceed.

I was quite sure that he had never seen anything just like the present mystery in all his life. He had dealt only with petty offenders, violators of the village ordinances and the like, and to have a murder case on his hands was quite another matter.

"What do you think, Mr. Lake?" I queried.

"Maybe it's all right, but what I can't get through my noggin is how two men could confess to the same crime. The lady was killed in her bedroom and by but one person."

I nodded.

"That's clear, eh? Now Pericles Plump is just as certain that he killed the poor lady and the other man comes along and says that Pericles is mistaken. It's funny to say the least," and he subsided and looked at me in a puzzled and amusing manner.

That he wanted me to give my opinion, I did not doubt, but just then I was not in the humor to oblige the garrulous fellow.

"The coroner's jury," proceeded my friend, the marshal, "was a queer make up. No doubt they wanted to do what was right, but they also seemed to side with Pericles Plump. I don't like to say it myself, but don't you know, Mr. Geyer, that he is a busybody and always has been ever since he came to Moss Mill."

"In what way?" I asked.

"In many ways. In the first place, while he claims that Miss Marigold owed him some money and that that is why he killed her, he also offered her his hand."

"Wanted to marry her, did he?"

"That's it, and she couldn't think of such a thing and promptly told him so."

"And then——"

"Can't you see through a brick wall? The rejection maddened the man, and—and——"

He paused as if he thought he was going too far.

"I don't accuse him, recollect," he corrected. "I don't do anything of the kind, but it looks bad."

"But," said I, "Gaston Bland says he killed his aunt because he believed that she had disinherited him when the will, which has come to light shows that she had made him her sole legatee."

"That's what it does. It's a question of veracity between the two men and the coroner's jury has believed Gaston Bland and rejected Pericles Plump's story."

"So it seems."

"No court will hang Bland on his statement alone, and if there is no corroborative evidence he will have to be acquitted."

"It's for you and I, perhaps, Mr. Lake, to solve this riddle and fasten the guilt where it belongs."

"I've been thinking of that," was the reply, and Gorgon Lake forthwith swelled up with self-importance.

Half an hour later I was alone. The afternoon had almost faded, but the excitement was still at fever heat at Moss Mill. Having found that the murder at Papyrus Court had been committed by Gaston Bland, the jury of inquest had dissolved and the young man's formal arrest had taken place.

He would soon be taken to Berryville, the county seat, and placed in jail. Pericles Plump still maintained that he was the guilty party, but he found few to believe his story, for the crowd went with the finding, and Pericles was plainly told to hold his tongue.

When night had fairly settled down over the landscape, I stole from Mrs. Smart's little hostelry and bent my footsteps towards the scene of the tragedy. This time I was alone, for I had not invited Gorgon Lake to accompany me, and I preferred to be quite alone on the expedition upon which I had set my mind.

I had not visited the place since my trip thither with Pericles Plump and I determined to see the interior of Papyrus Court all alone. To this end I had stolen from the hotel and was making my way over the road that led to the scene of the midnight crime.

There was a sign of storm in the night air, the tall trees on either side of the way were bending before the freshening breeze and scurrying clouds were blotting out the few stars that lit up the azure vault.

When I came near the house I darted aside and skirting a bit of ground, came upon the rear of Papyrus Court, where I could make out the back portion of the building. It was an old place, built during the middle of the last century, with great wings on either side and a rambling porch where the older Marigolds had time and again sat and overlooked a landscape which had not changed since their time.

A weird silence brooded over the spot, broken now and then by the half-frightened cry of a belated bird, and as I crept forward in the shadows of the old larches I felt the solemnity of the hour take possession of my bosom.

Of course I would not find any tenant in the old place now, for the body of Miss Marigold had been removed at the instance of the women of Moss Mill, who said that she, dear woman, should not be buried from the scene of her untimely death. They had had the body taken to the little parsonage in the village, where the good rector, Mr. Phidias Glenn, would read the service and see that Miss Marigold slept decently with her ancestors.

I had provided myself with matches, and upon entering the house, which was not much of a trick since the doors had not been fastened, I went direct to the room of the crime.

The old house was like a tomb for silence. No footfalls but my own disturbed it for a moment, and I opened the little door with the greatest care and struck a match.

The smear of the bloody hand on the wall behind the bed had attracted me when first seen and now I intended to take measurements of it for future use.

The little match flickering up revealed the interior of the chamber and for some time my eyes were blinded by the glare.

Leaning forward, I looked at the spot where I had seen the red hand, and then fell back with a start.

It was not there!

For a moment I could not credit the evidence of sight, but a second look, closer than before, told me that I was not mistaken.

Surely the hand was gone.

I held the match close to the wall, but there was no sign of it; where it had been was a little smudge which told me that some one had removed the mark, and that with a deftness which startled me.

Who had done this? Pericles Plump? Or had Gaston Bland been back to the house and obliterated the mark of his murderous hand?

In a few moments I found a lamp which I lit, and with it now inspected the chamber. The bed had been made up, the crimsoned sheets had been replaced with others without a stain and the whole horrid room had been renovated.

Who had done this? Some one had been here since my visit and put things in order, and I fell to thinking over the puzzle when I heard a door open.

As I turned, I came face to face with the rector, Mr. Glenn, whose face showed up white the moment he discovered that the place was already occupied.

It was not the first time I had seen Phidias Glenn. I had met him at the inquest where he was an attentive listener, and even there I had noted his severely pious look and the clerical cut of his garments.

Then his face was a darkish brown, but now in the light of my lamp it was ghastly.

"Ho!" cried the rector, as his eyes settled on me. "I did not know you were here," and then he coughed a little. "I came thither to see for myself the scene of Sister Marigold's terrible death. You——"

"My name is Geyer," I broke in. "I came here for the same purpose."

"You will pardon me, Mr. Geyer, but I think we have never met before."

"Possibly not. You are the Reverend Mr. Glenn and I am a detective."

"I see," and a little smile came to the corners of the man's mouth. "On the trail, I hope?"

"Perhaps, and it may be, Mr. Glenn, that you can help me."

CHAPTER VI.

THE GHOST OF THE STAIR.

"I am at your service, sir," and the minister bowed. "I always took a great interest in Sister Marigold, and to think that her graceless relative should come back after a lapse of years and take her life! The way of the transgressor is hard, and Gaston Bland will find this to be the case. But what, if anything, have you discovered, Mr. Geyer?"

Just as if I would tell him my secrets. I answered that as yet I was a little at sea, and then I put a question that caused a little start.

"You've known the late Miss Marigold some time?"

"For ten years," he said, coughing again. "She has been my parishioner for at least that time."

"And you knew her intimately?"

"As intimately as a rector knows the several members of his flock."

"What were her characteristics, may I ask?"

"She was a good woman, but a little peculiar. She was set in her ways and now and then railed out against some people whom she did not like."

"She had her little hatreds, then?"

"Like the best of us at times when we are not in unison with the Divine Plan."

"Did she ever mention her nephew, Gaston Bland to you?"

"Quite frequently. It was her intention to disinherit him, but she changed her mind and left the misguided young man the bulk of her wealth."

"So said the will, which was read at the inquest."

"Yes. At the time of making that document she did not know what had become of her relative. You will remember the will is dated almost three years ago."

I nodded.

"You are sure there is not a later will?" I asked. You were so close to the deceased that she would be apt to acquaint you with a codicil."

"Doubtless she would have done so and more than that—she would in all probability have called upon me to draw up the codicil. I have done a good deal of writing for her."

"Exactly! Might it be possible that a codicil exists? As she was a woman of likes and dislikes, despite her goodness, is it not possible, I ask, that another document exists cutting off Gaston Bland from his inheritance?"

"I hardly think so," answered the preacher. "I don't think that Miss Marigold ever changed her mind."

"It will do no harm to look through the house," and with this I took the lamp from the dresser and turned toward the door.

As I did so, I happened to glance into the mirror that hung in the bedroom and caught a passing glimpse of Phidias Glenn's face.

I noticed that it was no longer white, but had gone back to its brownish hue, and that the eyes showed unwonted eagerness. But as he was already treading at my heels, I had nothing more than a glimpse, and we passed from the chamber.

"You will show me where Miss Marigold kept her papers," said I. "Surely not in her bedroom, where there is nothing secure enough there. Is there not a safe of some kind in the house?"

"Her private desk is in the library."

"To the library, then."

We passed down the broad old-fashioned stair and entered the high-ceiled library where everything seemed invested with a somberness that sent a chill to hearts not used to the time and place.

The lamp, but illy lit up the large room, and as I set it down on the heavy mahogany desk that stood in one corner, I heard the voice of Phidias Glenn behind me.

"She always kept her private papers in that desk, sir. She was a person of few such things, did not have much business with the outer world, and in a measure might be called a recluse."

"You will look through the desk," said I. "I am not familiar with its arrangements and you know more about it, having been Miss Marigold's spiritual adviser."

The minister approached the old desk and threw back the lid, as it was not fastened. I caught sight of a lot of papers in the various pigeon-holes, and watched the dark-brown hands that delved among them.

Phidias Glenn brought them out and spread them on the little table which we had previously drawn to the desk.

I ran through the documents rapidly, finding nothing that was important, and at last told my companion to replace the whole lot. He swept them together, and was in the act of replacing the whole, when my eye caught sight of a sealed envelope.

"What is this?" I exclaimed. "A letter which the decedent never mailed?" and then as I turned it over I read across it in a cramped hand "To whom it may concern."

"Something evidently not of much importance," said Phidias Glenn. "Miss Marigold would never leave anything of that sort sealed in her desk without the knowledge of her friends."

"But we will see."

I tore open the envelope and drew out a folded paper, which when opened, was not much larger than my hand.

With a glance at the page I refolded the paper and thrust it into my pocket.

"It is important, then?" said the man in the glare of the lamp. "You think you may have discovered a clue?"

"I have not said so, Mr. Glenn. I have merely taken possession of the contents of the envelope, that's all."

His deep set eyes still rested on my face, and I thought I observed in their depths something that was not all piety. The look was in the nature of a look of triumph, and then the rector of Moss Mill turned to another matter.

"By the way, Mr. Geyer, did you notice the peculiar actions of a young lady during the taking of testimony at the inquest?"

"A young lady? I did not notice the actions of any one in particular. To whom do you refer?"

"To a young lady named Iris Foxcroft—a young miss who has said since the discovery of this crime that she is a distant relative of the poor dead lady."

"I saw a young lady at the inquest, [illegible] don't mind that she was called."

"Oh, she was not. Now, sir, I happen to know something of her history."

"Indeed? You know something of Miss Foxcroft's past?"

"Yes. She——"

"One moment," I interrupted, laying my hand on the clerical sleeve. "Will you tell me how you come to introduce this young lady into the conversation at this time?"

"I happened to recall her peculiar actions at the inquest and as you are a man of clues——"

"Go on," I said as he paused.

"She is a poor unfortunate thing," he proceeded. "Miss Marigold once mentioned her to me and I inferred that she was dependent on the dead woman for charity. It is singular that this girl should turn up at this exciting time. She has never been here before to my knowledge, and now she is taking a great deal of interest in the accused, Gaston Bland. Isn't it a little strange, all things considered?"

I was about to reply when the sound of footsteps on the stair, came to our ears, and both of us turned simultaneously toward the door leading into the hall.

The sound ceased as we did so, and I noticed that the face of Phidias Glenn lost a little color.

"Who is it, think you?" he asked in almost a sepulchral whisper. "Can we have been spied upon?——"

I was at the door, and in another moment had thrown it open and cast into the corridor the light of the lamp which I had snatched from the table.

I knew that the rector of Moss Mill was at my heels, for I felt his quick breath on my neck.

"What is it?" he gasped.

"There is nothing here. It must have been the wind which had raised——"

"No! look up yonder!"

Phidias Glenn had caught my arm and, pallid of face and trembling in every limb, was pointing up the flight as if he had seen at the top, the embodiment of doom.

"For God's sake——" he cried. "What is it? The ghost of Cleo Marigold!"

He would have fallen from sheer fright if he had not clutched my arm, and following his quivering finger, I looked up the stair and saw on the landing the face and figure of the murdered woman. Both were true to life, and while I stared at the apparition I felt my blood chill in my veins, for superstition is a part of our nature.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LADY OF THE STAIR.

I had never seen the late Miss Marigold in life, but the face on the stair was the counterpart of the features I had seen, both in the death chamber and at the inquest. The lamp revealed the apparition in all its ghastliness and for a little while, one brief moment, I looked upon it and then started toward the steps.

This movement of mine released the hold the minister had on my arm, and he fell against the wall with a horrifying groan. I did not turn to look at him, but bounded up the stair. The middle of the wide flight had not been reached when the specter disappeared and I found myself confronting nothing when I gained the upper floor.

The whole dread thing left in my heart a feeling which I cannot describe. The corridor which stretched in two directions, was as empty as air; a cold puff of wind came from the west and flickered the blaze of my lamp.

I bethought of the chamber in which the crime of Papyrus Court had taken place and, without looking back to see what had become of Phidias Glenn, I bounded thither.

The door yielded to my touch and, throwing it wide, in a moment I was inside.

There was nothing to confront me but the same things I had lately seen, and after a glance about the little room I turned back. The ghost, if the thing had been such, had dissolved into thin air and I had seen it for probably the last time.

Phidias Glenn, whom I expected to encounter when I went down to the lower floor, was not in sight, and for some time I stood in the hall wondering what had become of the man.

The door of the library opened at my right and I turned to stand face to face with the minister.

His face had not the slightest vestige of color. He stood in the open door holding onto the jamb with one hand, while he stared at me with eyes that seemed to swim in terror.

"Whither did it go?" he asked in sepulchral tones.

"The illusion, you mean?" said I. "Oh, that is what our imagination will do."

I laughed a little as I spoke, but this did not reassure the man.

"I can see how one person could be deceived, but when two——"

He paused and smiled a little, but it was a ghastly attempt.

"I cannot account for these hallucinations. If either you or I, Mr. Glenn, were guilty of this henious crime we might find an explanation, but as it is we will dismiss the matter. The old house may be already haunted——"

"Doubtless," he broke in with a perceptible shudder. "I am not feeling well, Mr. Geyer, and with your permission will go home. Our quest has resulted in nothing and I would not mention this strange adventure."

"You are right. It is not worth mentioning since it is unexplainable. You are going, eh? Well, I shall remain a while longer."

He made no objection to this and went away as rapidly as possible, and I was left alone in the strange house.

I waited till I no longer heard the sounds of his footsteps on the graveled walk beyond the front porch, and then turned back to the library. Setting the lamp upon the table near the desk, I pulled up a chair and took from my pocket the little piece of paper I had taken from the envelope.

There were but two lines traced across it, written in a cramped hand as if the writer were not an expert with the pen. They were in heavy black ink and quite readable. It took but a moment to read as follows:

"My codicil will be found in the secret place in the hidden room. It has been placed there for safety.

"CLEOPATRA MARIGOLD."

The hidden room! Where was it? In what portion of the old house was there a chamber of whose existence all did not know? And why had the dead woman placed in a secret place her codicil which might change everything for Gaston Bland?

A minute later I was going over the house looking for the secret room. I sounded every wall that met my gaze, looked into every closet I found and at last stood at the end of the hunt baffled.

I must come back some other time during daylight and resume the search. I would not be baffled for I believed that the finding of the hidden room would throw some light upon the tragedy of Papyrus Court.

It was quite late when I finally gave over my hunt and retraced my steps back to town.

As I passed down the main street I saw a bright light in Mr. Glenn's study and a dim one in the room where the corpse of Cleo Marigold lay.

For a moment I thought of ringing the bell of the little parsonage and acquainting the ministe[illegible]my unsuccessful search, but I gave over the idea and re-entered the hotel.

Mrs. Smart met me in the front room, and I saw a question in her eyes.

"Any new developments, Mr. Geyer?" she inquired. '"You see we women are inquisitive and, being one of the sex, you will pardon me."

I told her curtly, but with firmness, hoping that I would be pardoned for the white lie, that I had nothing new to give out.

"What do you know, Mrs. Smart?"

"Nothing but about the girl—Iris Foxcroft."

"What about her?"

"She came in awhile ago with her dress draggled and her face a sight. The poor creature has been wandering somewhere and seems to have fallen."

"Where is she now?"

"I gave her a bed. She says she will go back to Poston tomorrow. She was tired out when she came in and looked as if she had seen a ghost. Do you know," I was amused at the little woman's garrulity, "that I think that girl knows more about the affair at Papyrus Court than she has let out?"

"What could she know, madam?"

"That's what I have asked myself," was the reply. "She knows something, that's plain, to me, for I have been listening at her door and have heard her groaning like one in the deepest distress."

"You say her dress was draggled when she came in?"

"Yes. You know it rained a little today and the grass is wet now. The poor child has been out somewhere and that accounts for the dampness of her garments."

"Possibly so. Now, Mrs. Smart, who is this girl?"

"I really do not know. She claims to be a distant relative of the poor murdered creature, and for a few weeks, as she tells me, she has been an inmate of the Court. I never once caught sight of her for she never came down into town, but I am not here to dispute her statement. Miss Marigold was a woman of strange fancies, seldom had anything to do with any of us, and when she did it was in a manner that precluded an intimate acquaintance. But the girl. She says she lives in Poston, which is a small town about forty miles from here, and when she arrived at Papyrus Court no one knows. She has taken up with Gaston Bland, says that she does not believe him guilty——"

"Does she accuse Pericles Plump?" I interrupted.

"She accuses no one, only she sticks to her statement that Gaston Bland did not commit the crime."

"Why did he not? Does she say?"

"She gives no reasons for her belief. That makes it all the more singular, you know."

"What relation does she bear to the Marigolds?"

"She only says that she is distantly related, nothing more. I have questioned her about the relationship, but when she is pinned down she shuts up like a clam and that is the end of the whole matter. I am convinced that if she were watched, one might discover something that would tend to throw light upon the tragedy."

"And clear Gaston Bland? Do you mean that, Mrs. Smart?"

"No, for between you and I, Mr. Geyer, I believe the man is guilty. Why didn't he wait till he knew what was in the will and then take possession of his inheritance?"

I was about to turn to my room for the night when a new thought entered my head.

"Mrs. Smart," said I, "has Papyrus Court ever been connected with the supernatural?"

"With ghosts, do you mean?" exclaimed my hostess with a sudden start.

"Yes. Was it ever a haunted house?"

"Why, what have you seen there?" and the face of the landlady assumed a visible pallor.

"Nothing, perhaps. I am only asking a little question. You know some houses have the reputation of being haunted——"

"Then you have seen the Lady of the Stair?" cried Mrs. Smart. "And now you will not live long, Mr. Geyer. I am sorry. There was old Mr. Tagg who seen her last winter and the next week he was run over and killed. It means disaster to see that woman," and Mrs. Smart shivered with dread.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FLIGHT OF IRIS.

Although I wakened early the following morning, I was told by Mrs. Calista Smart, whom I found waiting for me in the hall, that Miss Foxcroft was already up and gone.

The girl had not waited for breakfast, but had slipped from her room and departed. She said she would not come back and Mrs. Smart was at a loss to account for her hurry.

"Maybe she wanted to take the early train?" I suggested.

"There is no train till ten," was the quick reply. "And I wouldn't think she intends to walk to Addison, which I am sure must be full ten miles from here.

"Did she seem to be excited?"

"She looked as if her sleep hadn't done her much good. Her eyes were red and swollen and her dress showed signs of the dragglement I mentioned last night."

"Which way did she go?"

"She went up the street toward Papyrus Court, but I watched her till she turned off at the first street and that's the last I saw of her."

"She had no luggage?"

"None at all. She brought nothing to the house, so far as I have seen, took nothing away."

"Had she any money?"

"She had a little in a purse, for when I offered to give her a bit, thinking that she needed help, she showed me her wealth and thanked me besides."

I ate my breakfast with a little haste, and when through left the hotel and betook myself by a roundabout way toward Papyrus Court.

The sun was just peeping over the Mohawk hills, and there was here and there a sign of rain where the grass was rank. The air was bracing and the road a little dusty. I soon made out marks of shoes in the dust, but at the first street to the right they disappeared as if the owner of the shoes had taken from the main way.

Back of the old house, now famous for all time, stood a dense little grove of oaks and larches. Some of the former were giants of their species and had stood there in solemn grandeur for centuries, their wide spreading branches being the home for birds and squirrels that flitted and chattered as if in delight everywhere.

The house seemed to invite me, despite my last adventure there, and I was soon beyond the rear threshold. This time I would not need a light for my investigations, for the morning beams would penetrate some of the darkest places and I was in hopes of finding the secret room, to say nothing of Miss Marigold's codicil.

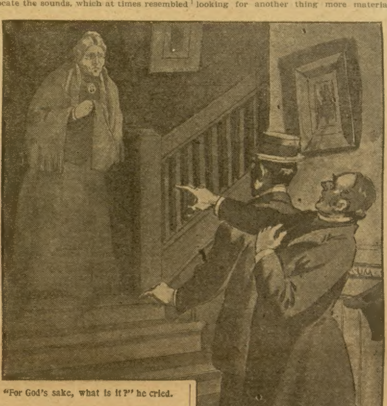
I went from room to room, searching the house from cellar to garret and at last found myself back in the library as if it alone attracted me.

If there was a secret apartment in the old pile it was so well hidden that in spite of my experience with such things I was completely baffled.

All at once I was listening to a noise that did not come from any part of the library.

The sound seemed to emanate from some place overhead, and the longer I listened the more puzzled I became. Was the Lady of the Stair about to make her presence known again?

I sat quiet for a little while and tried to locate the sounds, which at times resembled footfalls, but the longer I listened the more I was nonplussed.



"For God's sake, what is it?" he cried.

At times they seemed to be at the head of the stairs and then they would retreat to some other part of the house, until at last they died away and all became quiet again.

At last I resolved to investigate, so taking off my shoes, I quitted the library and stole into the wide hall. It was not so light there, owing in part to the fringe of vines over the porch, but I made out my surroundings and found the stair untenanted.

In another minute I was on the upper landing listening for a repetition of the strange sounds. The corridor was better lighted and while I looked in both directions I felt uncanny, to say the least, despite my boasted nerve.

Suddenly my ears caught the sound of a lifted latch, and as I recoiled, a door not ten feet away opened, and to my surprise I stood face to face with Iris Foxcroft!

Her face went white the moment she saw me, for I was right in her line of vision, and she started back and would have fled had I not bounded forward and seized her arm.

"You? You, the detective?" she exclaimed.

"Why not, Miss Foxcroft? This is common hunting ground."

"Yes, I know, but——"

She did not finish her sentence, but averted her face, and a shudder ran through her frame.

"You were not looking for me here? This is not the road to Poston?"

In another instant she seemed to have recovered, for she straightened and looked me squarely in the eye.

"You have tracked me!"

Her words were hard, cold and defiant.

"You have turned tracker of women," she went on, seeing that I did not reply. "Is this the way you hope to solve the mystery of Papyrus Court?"

"Strange ways may lead to the solution," said I. "You are interested in the solving of this red enigma? You are a relative of Miss Marigold, and——"

"Has the woman at the hotel babbled?" she cried. "Has she set you on my track?"

"She told me, of course, that you were gone, that you did not eat your breakfast——"

"I was not hungry. I had a right to leave the hotel, hadn't I?"

"A perfect right, miss."

"And without being tracked by a detective?"

"Yes. I did not expect to find you in this house, and if you will believe me, I did not come here hoping to encounter you."

"That is true, is it?"

"You have my word for it."

"And deeming you a gentleman, Mr. Geyer, I will take it. But what have you discovered?"

"Do you mean what new clues I have found concerning the crime of Papyrus Court?"

"Yes, yes. They have settled the crime on Gaston Bland, and have let the other one go free. The coroner's jury did this; but you were there for I saw you. Do you know what has taken place in this house since the murder?"

"Yes, and no," said I, anxious to draw the girl on. "I know that some interested party has been here, for a certain mark has disappeared."

"The mark of the crimson hand?"

"Yes."

"You have made that discovery, then?"

"I have, miss."

"And is that all?"

"Not all. I have also discovered that the house is haunted."

"Then you——"

Iris checked herself and fell back a step, looking at me with a face white again with the ghastliness of some horror.

"I have seen the Lady of the Stair."

To my surprise a light laugh rippled over the lips of the young girl, and she leaned forward, her eyes shining with strange merriment, out of keeping with the occasion.

"I care but little for the apparition now," I went on, before she could speak. "I am looking for another thing more material than spectral ladies. I want to find the hidden chamber of this house."

The laugh subsided and in its place came a little gasp, which told me that the shaft had gone home.

"You do?" she exclaimed. "So you think there is a secret chamber in this house, one which is not open to the public?"

"There is. Miss Marigold said so——".

"The dead Miss Marigold?" and I started at the sound of the words.

"Why not? She left the knowledge of the secret room in black and white."

The white-faced girl became as silent as the sphinx, and her gaze for a moment left my face and I thought she was on the eve of a revelation when she turned with a suddenness that was startling.

"You are a good detective," said she. "They would not have sent you down from the city on this matter if they had no confidence in you. The hidden room? Ah, yes. There is such a place and if we could find it we might be able to solve this mystery."

"We?" I echoed. "You do not know where it is, then?"

"I did know, but I have lost the trail of it.' Mr. Geyer, there is a greater secret about this house than any that now baffles you—the secret of the lost chamber. Find that and you will know who killed Miss Marigold."

I looked at the girl unable to speak for a moment, and when I ventured upon another question, Iris Foxcroft merely said: "No more!"

This strong story will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. Very strange and interesting situations develop as the narrative proceeds. Now is a good time to subscribe for the Ledger. As a story paper it is acknowledged to have no superior anywhere. Great stories of romance and mystery, of adventure and fascinating detective work, of the exploits of boys and girls, together with poetry and humor are steadily appearing in these pages. You should take the Ledger regularly. If you have not yet subscribed or your subscription has expired, send in your order for the paper at once. Boys who would like our King Cameras and ladies who desire the latest patterns are requested to note that we are giving three fine premiums absolutely free, as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Fooling the Public.

A lawyer said of the late Al Adams of New York:

"Mr Adams was very honest and upright with his friends. And if he frankly admitted that he duped the public—why, if all who duped the public were sent to prison for it our jails would have to be enlarged. Like Barnum, Mr. Adams claimed that the public liked to be fooled. As an example of the ease with which it could be fooled he used to tell a story about a calendar vender.

"This vender, one wintry day, entered a cafe, and said to a man who was reading a newspaper and drinking a hot lemonade:

"'Won't you buy a calendar, sir? The new year is close at hand.'

"'No, I don't want a calendar, the man answered, sipping his lemonade, impatiently.

"But the vender persuaded him to buy one, and he ordered it to be delivered to his wife at a house on the next square.

"Going to this house the vender said to the man's wife:

"'Your husband, madam, sent me from the cafe with this calendar, which he wishes you to buy for his desk.'

"The lady paid a quarter for the twice sold calendar, and the reckless vender returned to the cafe, where the husband sat. While he was trying to make more sales there the husband went home, heard of the trick that had been played on his wife and him, and ringing up his butler, said furiously:

"'Go down to the cafe at once and bring up the calendar vender you'll find there.'

"The butler went to the cafe, found the vender busy with a customer, and delivered his message. But the vender, handing out another calendar, said:

"'O, I know what the boss wants. He wants a calendar. Have you got a quarter? It will save me the trip up.'

"'Yes, here you are,' said the butler, and, taking the calendar with one hand and extending a quarter with the other, he hurried back home."

Couldn't Fool Him.

A traveler was passing through the mountains of north Georgia, and as night approached he sought shelter at the cabin of a native. He was made heartily welcome. When supper had been prepared, the larger of the two rooms of the cabin began to fill with children—the traveler estimated that there were at least twenty of them. They were denied participation in the chicken, but were provided with cornbread with which to "sop" the grease in which it had been fried.

"You have a very fine family," he said to his hostess. "They are all yours?"

"Oh, yes," was the reply; "an' thar's three mo'—I sont 'em over ter Miss Polly's fer er jug of buttermilk this mornin'. They ain't had much chances fer travel, an' I want 'em ter git a good eddication."

It developed that "Miss Polly's" was the home of a well-to-do woman who lived in "the big house," located some twelve miles away.

Presently the three "travelers" returned, and were at once deluged with questions.

"Did she let yo' all eat in the dinin' room?" the mother inquired.

"Sho' she did!" the eldest replied, patting his belt in recollection.

"Have anything yo' all didn't know what 'twas?"

"Wall," the boy said, doubtfully, "they done had something they called 'grave-eye,' but it looked like sop, an' hit taste like sop, an' I b'lieve in my soul 'twas sop!"

Her Gentle Hint.

"I don't believe you love me a bit," sobbed his wife.

"But I do, darling. I—"

"Don't tell me. It's unnatural you should. No man could love a woman who wears such old hats as I do."

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A thick head generates a multitude of thin ideas.

As a rule it isn't best to trust a near friend too far.

The katydid has come and the fall hat is impending.

A man is apt to get his back up when his wife calls him down.

We infer that Morocco does not care to hook up with European civilization.

Hustle for what you can get and don't worry about what you can't have.

Being the Governor of Colorado, Mr. Buchtel naturally stands up for his own State.

When it comes to harvesting the crop, a young man is sorry he sowed so many wild oats.

Not even his worst enemies have had the hardihood to refer to him as Vice President Farobanks.

What have Taft and Hughes ever done done to Mr. Rockefeller that he should publicly praise them?

New York is unable to sell her municipal bonds, probably owing to the present high prices of groceries.

Still, who knows but that Japan is building a battleship about four times the size of the Dreadnought?

Let us hope the telegraph strike may not extend so far as to result in shutting off the baseball scores.

Luckily Uncle Sam has a fine mail service, so most telegrams do not arrive more than a day or two late.

Self-raising flour would be a great boon to a man of family who is unable to raise a barrel of flour himself.

This nation is too busy to stop and have a panic merely to establish Mr. Rockefeller's reputation as a prophet.

Many little things indicate that the Standard Oil Company is trying to persuade Uncle Sam to call off the dog.

Henry Watterson, though scoring both the old political parties, will not, we think, affiliate with the prohibitionists.

Standard Oil products are cheaper abroad than at home. That may be because the poor foreigner cannot pay as much.

It should not be forgotten that the capitalists who are predicting ruin have made preparations to buy just as soon as things get down far enough.

Without the aid of a magnifying glass an Australian has written 10,000 words on a postal card. This will help as much as navigating the Niagara rapids in a barrel.

After he had finished a game of golf at Cleveland the other day John D. Rockefeller predicted a financial crash that would disrupt the country from end to end. Perhaps he had lost a few balls in the long grass.

THE FATAL MILLIONS.

BY EMMA HOWARD WIGHT.

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRIAL.

The courtroom was crowded to suffocation and all eyes were turned upon the woman who sat in the prisoner's dock. The hot flush, that had covered her face when she first entered the courtroom, had faded, leaving her sweet face pale and wan. She sat with downcast eyes, her hands clasped tightly together upon her lap.

Near her sat her husband and her counsel, Andrew Burke, one of the most prominent lawyers in the State.

The prosecuting attorney, Allan Newcome, read the indictment and then demanded of the prisoner if she were guilty or not guilty, to which she replied in a firm voice, "not guilty."

The first witness called was Winston Dungard.

He looked so white and worn and wretched as he stepped into the witness-box that hardly any one in the crowded courtroom failed to pity him, with the exception of one woman, perhaps, whose eyes lighted triumphantly as they rested upon his white, changed face. Certainly Clara Rostarn's revenge had gone far beyond her wildest hopes.

"Mr. Dungard, the prisoner at the bar is your wife, is she not?" the prosecuting attorney began.

"She is."

"Your marriage was a clandestine one, was it not?"

"Not exactly. It was not my intention to keep my marriage a secret at the time."

"Will you relate to the court what the circumstances were that led to your keeping the marriage a secret?"

Winston, with shrinking reluctance, did so.

"Was your brother's discovery of your marriage accidental?"

"No. I think it was brought about by a person who wishes to do my wife and myself an injury."

"Will you state to the court who that person is?"

Winston lifted his eyes and looked at Clara Rostarn, who had grown pale, and it was a moment or so before he replied.

"No. I would prefer not stating."

"Relate what occurred between your brother and yourself upon his discovery of the marriage."

Winston did so.

"Did your wife say anything to you of her intention to seek an interview with your brother?"

"She did not."

"Would you have permitted it, had she done so?"

"I would not."

"Was your wife aware before you married her that your brother was a very rich man, Mr. Dungard?"

"We never spoke of it, but I presume she was aware of it."

"You were absent from home at the time of the murder, were you not?"

"Yes."

"Who first informed you of the murder?"

"My friend, Mr. Richard Dunting."

"Did he also convey the information that your wife was accused of the crime?"

"He did."

"That was the first you knew of her visit to your brother's house, was it not?"

"It was."

"When you returned home and found your wife absent did it occur to you that she had gone to your brother's house?"

"It never occurred to me for a moment. I was at a loss to account for her absence from home."

"Had your wife ever expressed any bitter feeling toward your brother, Mr. Dungard?"

"Never."

"I think that is all, Mr. Dungard," said the prosecuting attorney.

The prisoner's counsel was asked if he wished to question the witness, and, upon his replying in the negative, Winston left the witness-box.

The next witness called was Mrs. Horace Dungard. There was a stir throughout the courtroom as Gratia entered the witness-box. As she lifted her black veil, there was a half-suppressed murmur of admiration. Grief had not dimmed any of the marvelous tints of the exquisite face. Her somber garb served but to intensify her wonderful coloring and deepen the gold of her hair. Never before had anything so beautiful been seen within the walls of that gloomy courtroom. The voice of the prosecuting attorney took on a tone of gentleness as he addressed her.

"Mrs. Dungard, when did you first see the accused?"

"On the lawn in front of the cottage where she lived, the afternoon my husband discovered the marriage."

"Did you recognize her at once when she came to you the night of the murder?"

"Yes. I think I should have recognized her anywhere; her face had impressed itself upon my mind, owing no doubt, to the circumstances."

"What did she tell you was her object in seeking you?"

"That I would enable her to see my husband. She said that she was afraid she would be denied access to him if she had asked for him at the door."

"Did she tell you her object in wishing to see the deceased?"

"Yes, she said that she wished to tell him the truth about hers and Winston's marriage. I told her that I feared it would not avail anything, but that I would take her to him if she still desired it. She said that she did, so I took her through the library bed-room and opened the door leading into the library, and she went in. I then went back to my boudoir and passed into my dressing-room. I remained there about twenty minutes, and, on returning to the boudoir, I found Mrs. Dungard lying insensible upon the floor. I was very much alarmed and my first impulse was to ring for my maid, but on second thought, I refrained from doing so. I soon succeeded in restoring Mrs. Dungard to consciousness. I then assisted her to one of the couches and made her lie down, for she appeared weak and overcome."

"Did she speak of the interview between the deceased and herself?"

"Yes; she said that I had been right and that her appeal to my husband had been in vain."

"Did she manifest any bitterness or indignation?"

"She said that Mr. Dungard had been hard, cruel and pitiless."

"Did she speak to you of the new will your husband had made?"

"Yes, she said that my husband had told her that he had made a new will that he was to sign on the next day and that Winston's name had no place in it."

"How did the accused come to remain all night in the house, Mrs. Dungard?"

"At my suggestion. I thought her far too weak and ill to return home. It was a complete nervous collapse."

"Did she readily consent to remain for the night?"

"No; she only consented when she found that she was really unable to make any effort."

"At whose suggestion did she pass the night in the boudoir?"

"At her own," Gratia admitted this with evident reluctance. "I protested against it, urging that she would not be comfortable, but she insisted."

"What reason did she give for wishing to pass the night in the boudoir?"

"She said that she wished to slip away early in the morning before any one was up and preferred remaining in the boudoir. She did not want to disrobe, but I insisted that she should do so in order that she might rest comfortably. I then rang for my maid, who helped Mrs. Dungard to undress, and then made her as comfortable as possible on one of the couches. I then sent my maid away and I remained with Mrs. Dungard until she fell asleep, when I retired."

"I think that is all, Mrs. Dungard."

The lawyer for the defense arose.

"Where was the dagger, with which your husband met his death, kept?" he asked.

"On a table in my boudoir."

"Can you assert positively that the dagger was in its usual place when you left the boudoir the night of the murder?"

"I have no reason to believe it was not in its usual place, but I could not positively assert that it was."

"It could have been missing without your noticing it, could it not?"

"Oh, yes, I would not have missed it that night, though I suppose I would have done so in time."

"Your bed-room, dressing-room, boudoir, library bed-room and the library all communicate, do they not?"

"Yes."

"Have all of these rooms doors opening upon the hall?"

"Yes."

"How many of these doors were locked on the night of the murder?"

"My bed-room door, boudoir and the library bed-room were locked from the [illegible]side; the door between the boudoir and the library bed-room was locked by my maid, as usual; she also locked the door of the dressing-room on the outside taking the key with her as she always does, in order that she may enter in the morning without disturbing me."

"How long has this maid been with you, Mrs. Dungard?"

"Ever since my marriage."

"You have perfect faith in her trustworthiness, I suppose?"

"Entire."

"I think that is all, Mrs. Dungard."

Gratia left the witness-box and also the courtroom.

The next witness called was Annie Carter, the maid.

"When did you first see the accused?" she was asked by the prosecuting attorney.

"On the night of the murder." The girl looked pale and frightened and kept her eyes studiously averted from the prisoner.

"Tell the court under what circumstances."

"I was in Mrs. Dungard's boudoir when she came in and told me that Madame Rene, her dressmaker, had sent one of her girls to alter a white satin dress and for me to get the dress. I went into the dressing-room for the dress, and, when I came back, the—the accused was with Mrs. Dungard. Mrs. Dungard told me never to mind about the dress, that I could go and not to come back until she rang for me. I put the dress over the back of a chair and left the room. It was about an hour later when Mrs. Dungard's bell rang. I went upstairs and found the accused, looking pale and sick, in the boudoir with Mrs. Dungard. Mrs. Dungard told me to make the accused as comfortable as possible in the boudoir for the night. I fixed a sort of bed on one of the couches. Mrs. Dungard had gotten a night-dress herself, and I helped the accused to undress. Mrs. Dungard then told me to lock the door leading into the library bed-room and that I could go, as she would not need me. As I was leaving the room, Mrs. Dungard told me not to say anything to any one of the presence of the accused in the house. I went out by the dressing-room door as I always did, locking the door after me and taking the key."

"Did you lock the door leading into the library bed-room?"

"Yes, sir, and then drew the portieres over it."

"I would like to ask the witness a few questions at this point," said Lawyer Newcome, rising. "Do you know whether the dagger, with which the murder was committed, was in its usual place when you left the boudoir?" he inquired of the girl.

"I—I know that it was," she replied, reluctantly. "Oh, sir, I wish you wouldn't ask me such questions," and she began to cry.

"Mr. Newcome no doubt regrets having asked the question," said the prosecuting attorney, with a grim smile.

Newcome waited a moment or so until the girl had recovered herself and then he asked:

"How do you know that the dagger was in its usual place on the table?"

"Because I saw it, sir, just before I left the boudoir. There was a lamp on the same table, with a shaded globe, that Mrs. Dungard told me to light before switching off the electric lights. When I lighted the lamp I saw the dagger."

"Could you not have mistaken something else for the dagger?"

"Oh, no, sir, that would have been impossible. There was nothing else on the table the least bit like the dagger. I remember noticing how the jewels in the handle flashed when I lighted the lamp."

"Where do you usually keep the key of Mrs. Dungard's dressing-room during the night?"

"On my bureau."

"Could any one have entered your room during the night, got possession of the key and return it without your knowledge?"

The girl smiled faintly at the question.

"That would have been quite impossible, sir."

"Why impossible?"

"Because my door was locked and bolted. If any one had picked the lock they couldn't have bolted the door again on the inside."

The counsel for the accused sat down and the prosecuting attorney resumed his cross examination.

"When did you again see the accused?"

"About seven o'clock upon the following morning. I heard her stirring about as I went into the dressing-room and I went into the boudoir to ask her if I could do anything for her. She thanked me and said no. She was up and dressed."

"Did you notice anything unusual in her manner?"

"She seemed a little nervous, but she did not look as ill as she had the night before. She seemed very anxious to get away and asked me what time Mrs. Dungard usually arose. When I told her that Mrs. Dungard never got up until between ten and eleven o'clock, she seemed undecided what to do. It was just then that Hammond discovered the murder and gave the alarm. I ran out into the hall and the accused followed me."

"Were you present when the butler ac-

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cused the prisoner of having committed the murder?"

"No, sir; Mrs. Morgan, the housekeeper, had sent me to Mrs. Dungard to keep her from leaving her room."

"That is all, I think."

The counsel for the prisoner again arose. "You say it was an hour after you left the boudoir the night of the murder before Mrs. Dungard rang for you. Are you sure it was so long?"

The girl considered a moment before replying.

"I think it was, sir, though it may not have been quite that long," she replied, at length.

"Do you think it possible for any one to have been concealed in Mrs. Dungard's apartments or the library bed-room the night of the murder?"

"Yes, sir, it was possible."

The lawyer sat down and the girl left the witness-box.

The next witness called was Hammond, the deceased's butler. He had aged years in the months that had followed Horace Dungard's death. He looked white and unnerved as he entered the witness-box.

"How long have you been in the service of the deceased?" he was asked.

"For more than twenty years, sir," Hammond's voice was tremulous and involuntarily he glanced toward Winston Dungard, a look that was a mixture of appeal and pain.

"You were no doubt attached to the deceased, having been in his service for so many years?"

"I was, sir, greatly attached to him. He was a kind and good master to me."

"You are also attached to Mr. Winston Dungard, are you not?"

"Yes, sir, I have known Mr. Winston since he was a small boy, and I am greatly attached to him." Tears rushed to the old man's eyes as he spoke.

"You admitted the accused on the night of the murder, did you not?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

"Did the accused inquire for Mrs. Dungard?"

"She did, sir. I showed her into the small reception room and went to inform Mrs. Dungard. I asked the accused if she would send up her name, but she said no. I met Mrs. Dungard coming out of the library and told her there was a young lady wished to see her. Mrs. Dungard told me to bring her up to the boudoir and this I did. When I went up a little later to tell Mr. Dungard that Mr. Brice wished to see him, the accused was in the library."

"You overheard part of the conversation between the deceased and the accused, did you not?"

"Yes, sir. I had no intention of listening, but both Mr. Dungard and the accused were so taken up with what they were saying that they did not see me."

"Tell the court what you overheard."

"I heard Mr. Dungard say, 'I have made a new will which I shall sign tomorrow, and in that will there appears no such name as Winston Dungard.' And then the accused said, 'I see that it is useless for me to appeal to you. You are cruel, pitiless, relentless. But it may be that you will not be able to carry out the act of injustice you contemplate.'"

"You were one of the witnesses to the will the deceased signed the night of the murder, were you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who was the other witness?"

"The housekeeper, Mrs. Morgan."

"Do you think any one but yourself and the housekeeper knew that the deceased signed his will the night of the murder?"

"No, sir, I do not. I do not think any one besides Mr. Dungard, Mrs. Morgan and myself even knew of Mr. Brice's visit. Mr. Dungard cautioned me later not to speak of the matter and told me to caution Mrs. Morgan, also. I went to Mrs. Morgan's room that night and told her what Mr. Dungard had said."

"You were the first to discover the murder, were you not?"

"Yes, sir." Hammond shuddered, as he spoke. "I went to the library at a little after seven o'clock and found Mr. Dungard murdered."

"Did it at once occur to you that the accused had committed the murder?"

"Not just at first, sir. I was too dazed and horror-stricken to think clearly. But, when she came into the hall library with Annie, Mrs. Dungard's maid, and I knew that she had been in the house all night, I remembered her words about the will and I—I accused her of having committed the murder to Mr. Conlow, the detective."

"Did you know when you accused the prisoner that she was Mr. Winston Dungard's wife?"

"Yes, sir. I knew it."

"Did you know that the accused had remained in the house all night until you saw her in the library the morning following the murder?"

"I thought that she had, but I was not positive of it. I asked Annie, Mrs. Dungard's maid, when she came downstairs how long the young woman who had gone to Mrs. Dungard's boudoir would remain, but she evaded my question. I learned later that Mrs. Dungard had instructed her to say nothing of the accused's presence in the house."

Annie Carter was recalled by the accused's counsel and asked if Mrs. Dungard had instructed her to keep the presence of the accused a secret. She replied in the affirmative.

"Did you do as Mrs. Dungard instructed you?"

"Of course I did, sir," the girl replied, with a touch of indignation.

The next witness called was James Conlow, the police-detective.

"You made an examination of the library, library bed-room and boudoir after the murder, did you not?" he was asked by the prosecuting attorney.

"I did."

"Did you make any discovery bearing upon the murder?"

"I found stains of blood upon the knob of the door leading from the library into the bed-room beyond; also stains of blood upon the drapery over the doorway leading into the boudoir. As these stains had the appearance of having been made by a blood-stained hand, I looked about for some traces of the blood stains having been removed. On a stand in the boudoir was a china bowl filled with hot house roses. I noted that the roses appeared somewhat disarranged. I examined the water in the bowl. It was a little discolored and I had it analyzed and found that it contained blood. I asked Mrs. Dungard's maid for the nightdress worn by the accused, but she said that she had seen nothing of it. I asked her if she had noticed the nightdress when she went into the boudoir in the morning and she said no. We searched the boudoir and could not find it. Later in the day the nightdress was brought to my by Sarah Jones, a housemaid. She will relate to the court how she came into possession of the nightdress."

Sarah Jones was called, and a young girl came forward and entered the witness-box.

"You are housemaid, are you not, at the home of the deceased?" she was asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Relate how you came into possession of the nightdress referred to by Mr. Conlow."

"Mrs. Morgan, the housekeeper, sent me into the library bed-room to put things to rights after Mr. Conlow was done looking about. I was so awful scared at being in the room by myself that I hardly knew what I was doing. I stumbled over a stool near the bed and caught hold of the canopy over the bed to keep from falling. I nearly pulled the whole thing off and something white fell to the floor. I picked it up and found it was a nightdress and there was stains on it that looked like blood. I knew it was the nightdress worn by the accused, for I had heard Annie Carter say that it could not be found. When Mr. Conlow came back to the house I took the nightdress to him."

The detective stepped forward with a white garment over his arm.

"Here is the nightdress, your honor," he said, addressing the judge.

He held up a dainty lace-trimmed night robe upon the front of which there were dark red stains.

"I think that Annie Carter will identify this as the nightdress worn by the accused the night of the murder," added the detective.

Annie Carter was called.

"Is this the nightdress worn by the accused the night of the murder?" she was asked by the prosecuting attorney.

The girl examined the nightdress and replied, unhesitatingly:

"It is, sir."

"You are perfectly sure that it is the same garment?"

"I am perfectly sure, sir."

The two girls were allowed to retire and the prosecuting attorney addressed the detective.

"What style of bed is that in the library bed-room?"

"A very handsome bed of solid mahogany, copied after the antique, with canopy of dark blue velvet brocade"

"The nightdress then, had been thrown on the top of this canopy?"

"Yes."

The next witness called was Doctor Sommer, the Dungards' family physician.

He testified that Hammond, the butler, had called him up on the 'phone at a little after seven o'clock on the morning following the murder and told him to come to the house at once, that Mr. Dungard had been murdered. He had found the deceased in the library, dead. He had been stabbed in the back, as he sat at his desk. The weapon had penetrated the lungs, and death had been instantaneous.

"How long had the deceased been dead when found?" he was asked.

"From seven to eight hours."

"The murder was committed by the dagger found on the floor by the desk, was it not?"

"Yes, there can be no question of that."

Doctor Sommers also testified that he had, at the request of Mr. Conlow, analyzed the water from the bowl in the boudoir and found that it contained blood.

The two servants of the accused, cook and nursemaid, were examined and testified to their mistress having left home upon the evening of the night of the murder, saying that she would return in the course of an hour or so. When asked if they had been surprised when the accused failed to return that night, they replied that they were both surprised and worried.

The nursemaid testified that Mr. Winston Dungard had returned the morning following the murder and had appeared very much surprised to find his wife absent.

"Did he appear to have any suspicion as to where his wife had gone?" she was asked.

"No, sir, he did not. He seemed to be at loss to think where Mrs. Dungard could have gone, and very much worried. She had not spoken with Mr. Dungard after he learned of the murder. He had left the house at once with Mr. Dunting."

The girl broke down at this point and burst into tears.

"Oh, sir," she sobbed, appealing to the judge, "Mrs. Dungard is one of the sweetest and best ladies that ever lived. She never could have done that awful thing," and the girl left the witness-box crying bitterly.

Winston Dungard's haggard eyes followed her for a moment or so and then drooped again wearily. He looked white and ill and as though he hardly comprehended what was taking place.

Miss Mary Dungard was placed in the witness-box and mostly examined as to the deceased's long and remorseless hatred of Charles Marvin. She admitted that her brother's relentlessness toward Winston when he learned of the marriage, had not surprised her. In fact, she would have been more surprised had he acted differently, that is, shown any leniency.

As Mary Dungard left the witness-box, the judge leaned forward and addressed the prisoner.

"Nesta Dungard, is there anything that you would wish to say in your own defense?"

Every eye in the courtroom was turned upon the white wan face of the prisoner as she arose to her feet.

"I am innocent of the crime with which I am charged," she said, firmly and unfalteringly. "I never left the boudoir during the entire night."

"If you are innocent of the crime with which you are charged, how do you account for the array of circumstantial evidence against you?" asked the judge.

"I cannot account for it. It is to me an awful mystery."

The judge then inquired of the two lawyers if they wished to question the accused.

"Mrs. Dungard, when did you remove the nightdress in which you slept the night of the murder?" asked Lawyer Burke.

"When I arose in the morning."

"Do you remember what you did with it?"

"I think I put it on the couch on which I had slept, but I am not positive as to that."

"You are positive, however, that you did not remove the nightdress until you arose in the morning?"

"I am positive that I did not remove it until that time."

"Mrs. Dungard, how did you sleep the night of the murder?"

"I was very tired and I slept very soundly."

"Did you awaken at all during the night?"

"I awakened once, but I fell asleep again almost immediately."

"It was quite possible then, for any one to have been in the boudoir and for you to have been unaware of it?"

"Yes, quite possible, indeed."

"Mrs. Dungard, when you said to the deceased that it was possible that he might not be able to carry out the act of injustice he contemplated, or words to that effect, what did you mean?"

"I hardly know just what I did mean. I think I had an idea that God would not permit him to do such a wrong."

"You did not mean the word as a threat?"

"Such a thought as that never even occurred to me. How could I mean them in that sense?"

Mr. Burke resumed his seat and the prosecuting attorney arose to question the accused.

"You claim, Mrs. Dungard, that you did not remove the nightdress until you arose in the morning. In that case, how do you account for its being found on the canopy in the library bed-room?"

"I cannot account for it."

"You admit, however, that it is the gown in which you slept?"

"You are not obliged to reply to that question, Mrs. Dungard," interposed her counsel. "Nor to any question that would tend to incriminate you."

"Why should I refuse to reply to that question?" said Nesta, quietly. "I do not admit that the gown, with blood stains upon it, that was found in the library bed-room, was the one in which I slept. On the contrary, I assert that it was not the same gown."

"Indeed!" There was a subtle note of incredulity in the prosecuting attorney's voice. "In what way does it differ from the one you wore?"

"I can see no difference, but it is utterly impossible for it to be the same."

"Mrs. Dungard's maid declares it to be the same."

"I object," cried Lawyer Burke.

"Very well," said the prosecuting attorney. "One more question, Mrs. Dungard. "You were not aware that the deceased did sign his new will after you left him on the night of the murder?"

"No, I was not aware of it."

There were no more witnesses to be examined and Lawyer Burke arose and began his speech for the defense. He was followed by the prosecuting attorney. It was late in the afternoon when the judge arose to charge the jury. Then the jury filed out of the courtroom.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE VERDICT.

"Do you think it is nearly over?" asked Gratia.

She lay upon a couch in Mary Dungard's sitting-room, looking pale and unnerved.

"I should think so," Mary replied. "This suspense is terrible."

"Richard Dunting promised me that he would come and at once tell me the result," Gratia added.

"I wonder if Winston will remain until it is all over," murmured Mary. "How dreadfully ill he looks! I should think it would kill him if she is found guilty."

"He believes her guilty," said Gratia, in a low voice.

"Yes," said Mary Dungard, shudderingly. "It is very dreadful that he should."

"What else can he believe?"

"There are some who do not believe her guilty in spite of the evidence against her. Richard Dunting is one."

"I sometimes think, Gratia, that Richard Dunting cares more for her than he should." Mary Dungard spoke in a shocked voice.

"I think that he does love her, but it's a beautiful, noble love."

"You forget that she is the wife of another man."

"Oh, no, I do not forget that." There was a touch of contempt in Gratia's voice.

At that moment Richard Dunting came into the room. As he came slowly forward, both women read the truth in his face. Gratia rose slowly from the couch.

"She has been found guilty?" she said.

"Yes.' Richard Dunting sank down into a chair and covered his face with his hands. Mary Dungard burst into tears. Gratia alone was calm and self-collected.

"What is it?" she asked. "The worst?"

"Yes," Dick groaned. "Murder in the first degree—death."

Mary Dungard started to her feet.

"Oh, I must go watch for Winston," she cried, and left the room.

Gratia went up to Dick and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Mr. Dunting, you love Nesta Dungard?" she said, softly.

He lifted his white, haggard face and looked at her.

"Yes, I love her," he replied. "I love her as deeply, as reverently as ever man loved. I loved her before she became Winston Dungard's wife, I shall love her till I die, but that love cannot wrong her even in thought. Her husband, God pardon him, believes her guilty of an awful crime, the law has sentenced her to die for that crime, but she is innocent."

She bent toward him and said something in a low voice.

He started and looked at her half-wonderingly, half-incredulously.

"We cannot discuss this matter here nor now," she added, hastily. "Will you call upon me tomorrow, say at about three o'clock?"

"Yes." He arose as he spoke, looking still a little dazed. "Yes, I will be here at the hour you name."

An hour later Mary Dungard found Winston lying insensible on the floor beside the bed where little Daisy lay sleeping. At first she thought that he was dead, had killed himself, and her shrieks brought Gratia and the servants quickly to the room.

"He ain't dead, Miss Mary," Hammond said, as he knelt and lifted Winston's head, "He's only in a faint—thank God."

It was a long time before Winston was restored to consciousness, and before morning he was raving in delirium.

It was six weeks later when Winston awoke to consciousness again.

He was in his own room and a trained nurse was seated beside the bed.

"You are feeling better?" she said cheerily, as Winston looked at her with the light of reason once more in his eyes.

"Have I been ill?" he asked, weakly.

"Yes, very ill," was the reply. "But here is your sister. She will be glad to find you better."

The nurse moved away from the bed as Mary approached.

"You know me, Winston?" she said, as she bent over him.

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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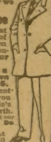

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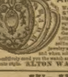

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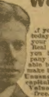

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Progress.

It used to be bread and cheese and kisses. Now it is champagne, duck and divorces.—Life.

JOKES AND

Sad Domestic News.

Daughter—Bridget has become remarkably attentive to her duties lately.

Mother (sadly)—I have noticed it.

Daughter—Yes; she has stopped slighting her work, and pa's shirts and collars and cuffs are starched beautifully. She walked twenty squares last Saturday afternoon to see a woman who had promised to show her how.

Mother—My! my!

Daughter—And lately she has begun studying cook-books, and asking me all manner of questions about the desserts and other dishes which I have always had to make myself. She seems determined to master every department of housekeeping.

Mother—Alas! It is as I feared. She is going to be married!

An Example.

"Ma!"

"Yes, my son."

"What is an emergency brake?"

"An emergency brake, my boy, is when the maid lets a plate fall to the floor just as your father is about to swear at the meat."

Others Had a Share.

"Then you do not claim to be a self-made man?" queried the astonished reporter.

"No, indeed," replied the millionaire manufacturer. "The wealth I have is due to the industry and faithfulness of the people in my employ."

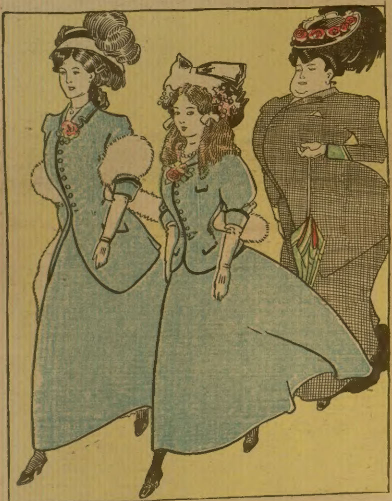
The Only Time.

"There is at least one time in life when a woman hasn't any more to say than a man," remarked Wedderly.

"When is that?" queried Singleton.

"During the marriage ceremony," explained the man with the experience.

EXPURGATION.



"There are some pictures at the art gallery, children, which I don't wish you to see."

"Which ones, mamma?"

"I'll show you!"

Too Much Reason for Love.

"Oh, mamma, I'm so unhappy!" sobbed the bride of two months. "George doesn't love me any more."

"What makes you think that, dear?" asked the mother anxiously.

"Because he expects me to give in whenever he is in the right."

AGENTS WANTED

Nearly all the readers of THE LEDGER will find these advertisements of interest to them. There will be found among them some excellent chances of making money by selling goods to friends, neighbors and others. Those seeking such an opportunity either as a regular or temporary occupation, should write the advertisers whose offers follow.

AGENTS GET THIS $200

Taking only one order a day for our high-class, medium priced made-to-order Suits, Overcoats and Trousers, will give you a steady monthly income of $50.00 or more. No previous experience needed to succeed—our special guarantee plan gets the orders. Large Sample Outfit in Traveling Case furnished live hustlers free. Write now and get into business backed by big house. We will make you a cracker-jack, well-dressed salesman with money.
WARRINGTON WORSTED & WOOLEN MILLS
Dept. 50 173 Adams St., Chicago.

Th. Daughter Balked.

"I thought," said old Groucherly, "that I could save money by refusing to give my consent to my daughter's marriage with young Huggins, but it's no go."

"What's the trouble?" queried the friend of the family.

"She declines to elope," exclaimed the old man, with a large, open-faced sigh.

That Veil.

Mrs. Hix—I'm afraid I'll have to quit wearing this veil. It affects my eyes.

Mr. Hix—I'm not surprised at that. I know it affects mine.

Mrs. Hix—Why, how in the world can it affect your eyes?

Mr. Hix—Every time you have it on I imagine you are good-looking.

Missed His Chance.

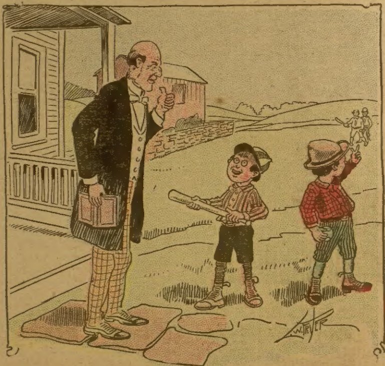
He—What would your father do if I told him I wanted to marry you?

She—He'd refer the matter to me.

He (hopefully)—And what would you do?

She—I'd refer the matter to the young man who proposed to me and was accepted while you were trying to make up your mind.

DIFFERENCE IN LONGITUDE.



Mr. Soltum—Thomas, I saw you and Edward playing ball out in front of the house. You are violating the Sabbath. If you must play ball go to the lot back of the barn.

Edward—Come on over to the back lot, fellers. It ain't Sunday over there.

A Diplomatic Parson.

"The congregation paid up every cent of my back salary today," announced the village minister.

"How in the world did they happen to do that?" queried his astonished wife.

"I announced from the pulpit," explained the good man, "that unless I got it I would not be able to take the three months' vacation I had planned."

Saw Her Twice.

Tom—It was a case of love at first sight with me.

Jack—Then why didn't you marry her?

Tom—Oh, I saw her again on several occasions.

Injustice to the Julep.

City Nephew—And you never order lamb with mint sauce?

Col. Frankfort—I do not, suh. I think it is a very poor use to make of mint, suh.

A Moment With Science.

Caller (great scientist)—The workings of the human mind when asleep are full of wonder. Have you ever started up from a soud, dreamless sleep, with every sense on the alert, and with your whole being thrilled with a vivid yet indefinable feeling that something was wrong, and instant action required?

Mrs. Tantrum—Often, and in nearly every case I have found that I was awakened by the fumbling of my husband's night-key at the front door.

The Finishing Bolt.

"Harker says he is going to follow Doctor Wiley's advice and bolt his beefsteak."

"Sounds queer."

"Then he is going to bolt all the raw clams he eats."

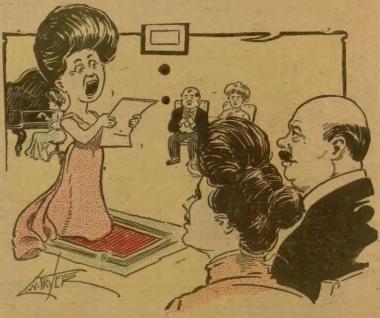
"Queerer still."

"And the next he will bolt his chops."

"Great Mercury! What is his next bolt?"

"Why, a bolt to the cemetery."

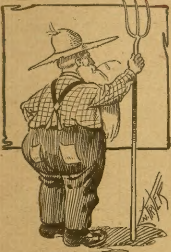
CAN'T HELP IT.



She—There seems to be a great many accidentals in that song.
He—Is that so? Why, I thought she was doing it on purpose.

JOLLITY
WEIR

A Country Seat.



Equal to the Task.

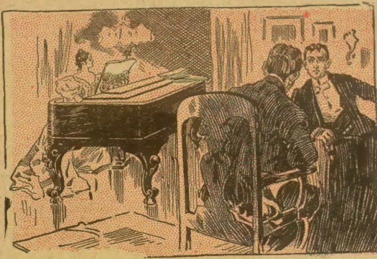
Said She—If you attempt to kiss me I shall scream for help.

Said He—You seem to have overlooked the fact that I am an athlete.

Said She—What has that got to do with the case?

Said He—I don't need any help.

HYPNOTIZED.



"What kind of a day was it when you got married?"
"Ask my wife. I didn't come to for a week."

At the Chophouse.

Mary had a little lamb,
But later said with grief
That if she'd known how dear it was
She would have ordered beef.

Final Test.

Farmer Haycroft had just engaged a man to help him through harvest time.

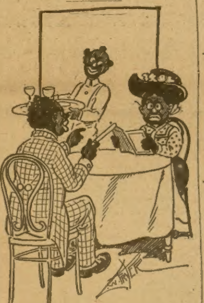
"You haven't asked me," said the new hand, "whether or not I have ever had any experience as a hired man."

"I'll know all about that," growled Farmer Haycroft, "as soon as I've seen you eat."

His Experience.

Singleton—Do you believe that marriage really broadens a man's mind?

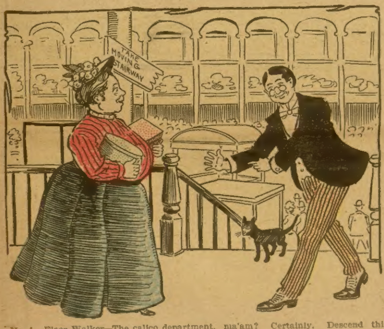
Wedderly—I don't know about that—but it flattens his pocketbook, all right.



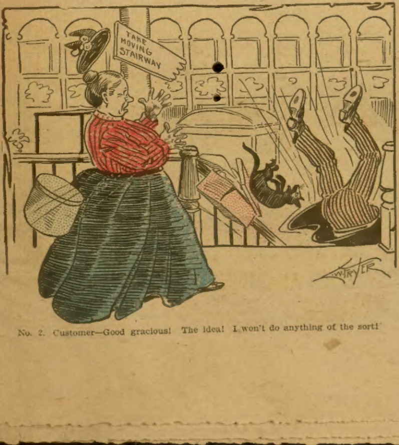
Miss Sweet—Bring me a leg of de duck—a small leg ob lamb, an'——

Mr. Blizzard—Won't you hab de leg ob de table, too?

NOT FOR HER.



No. 1. Floor-Walker—The calico department, ma'am? Certainly. Descend this way, please.



No. 2. Customer—Good gracious! The idea! I won't do anything of the sort!

AGENTS WANTED

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FREE OUTFIT TO AGENTS

Consisting of Combination Dipper (nine different articles combined into one, most useful and handy kitchen utensil ever invented) and five other useful and attractive household utensils, viz.—Favorite Cake Spoon, Perfection Cake Tin, Self-Sealing Pie Tin, Clean Cut Tin and Rapid Potato Masher. These six articles of best material which retail for $1.00, we will send with catalog by express, absolutely FREE, to any one wishing to sell our goods sending 25 cents to pay cost of packing, etc. Address Dept DA Household Novelty Works, Chicago, Ill., or Buffalo, N.Y.

$41.00 per week and expenses, to man with rig, to introduce our Poultry Goods. EUREKA MANUFACTURING CO., Department L, Navasota, Texas.

AGENTS, CREDIT, Perfumes, Flavors, etc. Big profits. Express Paid. Terms Free. HERBENE AGENCY Co., Box 282, Sta'n L, New York

$150. A MONTH PROFIT E. B. ROBERTS, [illegible] sent selling Electric Combs. YOU CAN EARN IT Dr. C. L. HULL, 1431 Penn Ave., Pittsburg, Pa.

AGENTS PORTRAITS 35c, FRAMES 15c, sheet pictures 1c, stereoscopes 25c, views 1c. 30 days credit. Samples & Catalog Free. Consolidated Portrait Co., 290—30 W. Adams St., Chicago.

SELL TOBACCO AND CIGARS. Locally or traveling. Salary or commission. Full time or side line. Steady work. Good pay. Promotion. Address MOROTOCK TOBACCO WORKS, Box U 13, DANVILLE, VA

AGENTS wanted to represent old established Mail Order House. Over one thousand rapid selling specialties. From $5 to $10 per day easily made; costly outfit free. GEORGE A. PARKER, Dept. 74, 720 Chestnut Street., PHILADELPHIA, PA.

$18 to $30 WEEKLY Guaranteed Men & Women Sell Watches, Jewelry, or appoint agents. Sample $10.00 Watch free. Don't wait until your territory is taken. Write today to UNION WATCH CO., Dept. 189, CHICAGO, Ill.

$3 a Day Sure Send us your address and we will show you how to make $3 a day absolutely sure; we furnish the work and teach you free, you work in the locality where you live. Send us your address and we will explain the business fully, remember we guarantee a clear profit of $3 for every day's work, absolutely sure. Write at once. ROYAL MANUFACTURING CO., Box 1016 Detroit, Mich.

SALESMEN.

Men who possess selling ability can get the most for it by representing us for the sale of our popular policies of accident and health insurance. Experience not essential. Exclusive territory and active co-operation given to hustlers. Excellent openings and liberal terms for agents, collectors and district managers. Address, at once,
Dept. 78, CONTINENTAL CASUALTY COMPANY, CHICAGO, ILL.

MAKE MONEY EASY

Agents wanted in every county to sell the popular Novelty Knives for Christmas Gifts with name, address, photo, lodge emblem, etc., on handle. AGENTS EARN $75 to $300 A MONTH (We show you how) Big profits—quick sales—exclusive territory. Write quick for our liberal money making special offer to agents. Our new self-sharpening scissors are the quickest sellers for lady agents. NOVELTY CUTLERY CO., 28 BAR STREET, CANTON, O.

Rider Agents Wanted in each town to ride and exhibit sample 1906 model. Write for Special Offer. Finest Guaranteed 1906 Models $10 to $27 with Coaster-Brakes and Puncture-Proof tires. 1904 & 1905 Models all of best makes $7 to $12 500 Second-Hand Wheels All Makes and Models, good as new $3 to $8 Great Factory Clearing Sale. We Ship on Approval without a cent deposit, pay the freight and allow TEN DAYS' FREE TRIAL. Tires, coaster-brakes, sundries, etc. half usual prices. Do not buy till you get our catalogs. Write at once. MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept D53 Chicago

FIRE The FIRE FIEND works day and night and never takes a holiday. The wise property owner insures in the BEST Company BECAUSE it is the cheapest. The CONNECTICUT Fire Insurance Company of Hartford, Conn., paid (dollar for dollar) over TWO AND ONE-HALF MILLION DOLLARS to claimants in the late San Francisco fire, and has paid over TWENTY-FIVE MILLION DOLLARS to claimants since its organization. It has nearly SIX MILLION DOLLARS on hand to meet new liabilities. It indemnifies against loss by fire, lightning, tornado and windstorms, all classes of property, including farm, issuing a policy devoid of technicalities and settles all honest claims without quibble or delay. Reputable agents wanted in thrifty towns and villages where not already represented. Address J. J. McDONALD, Manager, 381 Rookery Bldg., CHICAGO

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ACENTS' DIRECTORY LIST,
INDIANA, INDIANA COUNTY, PA

LOVE AND VILLAINY.

A STORY OF THE RANCH LANDS. BY THOMAS P. MONTFORT.

[Copyright by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 33, August 17. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN DANGER.

Abe put away his horse and then walked out on the plain to a knoll, where he sat down to do some hard and serious thinking.

That was one of the times when he wanted to be alone with nature and his own thoughts. He did not want to talk or be talked to, and he did not want to be about where other people were.

The things that Shorty had told him had affected him far more than he was willing to confess. They had sunk deep into his heart and stirred his feelings to the very bottom.

They even at times caused a faint ray of hope to flash across his mind.

She had kept his picture, and, more than that, she had cried over it and kissed it. What else could that mean except that she had not forgotten, and that, in spite of all, her heart and her love were still his? Oh, joy! If only such was the case.

Then doubt crept up and whispered in his ear. It could not be so, after that which had passed. It was impossible that she could still care in view of her conduct back there. And then there was Daniels. If she cared why was she always with him, and why was she going to marry him?

No, it was all a mistake. It was not his picture that she had kissed. Shorty had been mistaken, that was all. She did not care, and she and Daniels were going to marry, and that would be the end.

He raised his head and looked away to the south where the plain stretched away for miles, level and barren and void of all things of life.

"So like what all the years of my existence must be," he thought. "Just one long barren stretch of days and months and years, with nothing to break or lighten its terrible monotony."

Presently as he looked two dark specks appeared on the plain, away off there where the earth and sky seemed to meet. He watched them vacantly, and after a while they seemed to grow in size.

Ten minutes passed, and then a flush came to his face. The specks had grown into two people on horseback, and a little later into a man and a woman.

"It is she and he," Abe muttered.

His anger rose, but still he watched them, or rather he watched her.

Suddenly he sprang to his feet, his anger giving place to a feeling of alarm.

Away back behind the moving figures a long, dark line was showing just at the edge of the horizon. It had the appearance of a cloud just peeping over the rim of the earth.

But Abe's practiced eyes told him that it was not a cloud. He was not sure but he was confident he knew what it was. Two or three minutes more and he knew.

"A stampede!" he cried. "God, and she is in its path!"

Miss Clyde and Daniels were riding leisurely all unmindful of danger. They had not looked back and they did not dream of that terrible thing that was following them. They had no thought of the thousands of maddened cattle that were bearing silently down on them, tramping under foot everything that came in their way.

Abe called at the top of his voice to attract their attention, but they were more than a mile away and could not hear him. Then he waved his hat frantically, and presently he saw a white handkerchief flutter for a moment in the evening breeze. But the riders continued slowly on their way.

He had attracted her attention, but she had not understood. He became frantic. He limped to and fro, so eager to do something, yet so impotent. He called again and again, but there was no response. Again he waved his hat, and once more there was the flutter of her handkerchief. But that was all.

She did not understand and he could not make her.

"Oh, if she would only look back," he thought. "If she would only turn her head for an instant and see that sinuous, cruel thing that is bearing down on her! But she will not. She does not know, and when I can make her understand it may be too late."

In that moment he knew as he had never known before, how dear she was to him. In that hour of danger his love cried out for her in all its great strength, and he felt that without her, with her life forever gone, he could not live another day.

If he had had a horse he would have galloped out to meet her, and either rescued her or died with her. But his horse was a mile away at the ranch. There was nothing, absolutely nothing that he could do.

The suspense and the agony of those minutes were excruciating, and each one of them seemed a year.

He looked again. The riders were coming toward him but oh, so deliberately, so slowly. And just behind them that long, dark line was moving with all the swiftness it possessed. The space between the two people and the mad herd was narrowing every instant.

"Why can't they see or hear?" Abe questioned. "Why can't they understand?"

Again he called, and again he waved his hat, and once more he pointed back toward the cattle. Again there was the flutter of a handkerchief, and that was all.

Then the next moment Abe gave a sigh of relief. At last she had turned her head and looked back. A sharp cry reached him faintly, and he saw the two ponies whipped into a gallop.

"That is better," he said. "If nothing happens they can save themselves yet."

Aye, if nothing happens.

The ponies were running evenly and they were covering the ground well. But the stampede was near, and was holding its own. The ponies were not gaining, if any.

Abe saw Miss Clyde's hat blow off and sail back toward the cattle. In a moment it was trampled to pieces under a hundred hoofs.

"Ah! Suppose she would lose her seat and fall! In one moment she would meet the fate of her hat, and her body would be torn and mangled under all those relentless feet. He sickened at the thought, and for an instant, turned his head away.

When he looked again he saw that she was calm and cool, and that she sat her pony well. He breathed easier.

She was not very far away from him then and he believed he could make her hear his voice. So as loud as he could he called to her, telling her to swerve to the right and head for the ranch. In that way she would pass out of the course of the cattle.

Whether or not she heard he did not know, but he saw her shift her course. He drew a deep breath of relief.

"She is safe now," he said to himself, "if nothing happens. In a few minutes she will be out of the stampede."

He waited a moment and then he repeated:

"If only nothing happens!"

Yes, if only nothing had happened. But it did. Abe saw it and his heart sickened.

CHAPTER XXII.

A RESCUE.

Just as she turned Miss Clyde's pony stepped into a prairie dog's hole and pitched forward on his nose. He righted himself in an instant, and went galloping on, but she was no longer on his back.

The sudden stop and the pitch forward had caused her to lose her balance, and she had gone off over the pony's head. Abe saw it all, and he saw too, that she lay still where she had fallen.

More than that he saw Daniels continue on, after one quick glance back, leaving her to her fate. Abe called to him and cussed him, but if he heard he did not heed.

Abe saw the cattle drawing nearer and nearer, until only a little way lay between them and Miss Clyde. It was only too evident that she was lost, unless something was done, and done quickly.

He did not lose time. He did not stop to consider how great a risk he was running, nor how like throwing himself into the jaws of death his act was. All he thought of was that a human life, her life, was in danger, and that he alone might save it.

Madly and recklessly he dashed down from the knoll and out across the hundred yards of prairie that lay between him and her. He limped yet from his injuries in the cyclone, but he forgot all about that.

As he went along he noticed how close the cattle were, and how rapidly they were narrowing the distance. It seemed to him that he had never seen cattle run like that. He realized more fully than ever that there was not one moment to lose.

When he reached Miss Clyde he found her unconscious. He did not know whether she was even alive. But there was no time to find out. No time to so much as feel for her pulse or the beating of her heart.

He snatched her up in his arms and, giving one quick glance back, started for the knoll.

That once glance alarmed and startled him more than ever. The advance of the stampede was only a few feet away, and it was bearing relentlessly down, right on him.

He felt that it would be almost a miracle if he ever escaped. No man, he reasoned, could ordinarily outrun that herd, and how much less could he be expected to do it, burdened as he was with the weight of another. But he set his teeth hard together, and over and over he repeated to himself:

"But I've got to do it. I've just got to do it."

And never had he run as he ran then. It is doubtful if the record he made that day has been often excelled, or even equaled. His own life, and another, dearer than his own, were at stake. It was simply a case of having to perform an impossibility. It was an illustration of what a man can do when he has to.

And yet it seemed to him he only crawled over the ground, and that hours were passing. He looked forward to the knoll and it seemed miles away. He felt that it was all so hopeless. He almost gave up.

But then there came to him that ominous roar, like rolling thunder or an approaching storm, the beating of thousands of hoofs on the dry hard ground. Every moment it grew louder, stranger and more deafening. In that roar lay death and destruction, and he knew it only too well.

So on and on he went, his breath coming in gasps. But he did not know that he was tired. His strength was almost gone, but he did not know that, either. All he knew was that the knoll lay before him and that he must reach it.

Once he glanced back, and all he ever remembered seeing was a long line of white, sharp horns. And he was surprised that they were so near him. It seemed to him that he could almost have touched them with his hands, as he turned his face again to the front, he expected every moment to be his last, and at every step he expected to feel a horn gore his flesh.

Then at last he reached the knoll, and staggered up its steep side with his burden. As he started up he felt the hot breath of the cattle on his neck, and the next instant he saw the herd part and sweep by on either side of the knoll.

After that the world seemed to fade away, and everything became a blank. For an instant there was a deafening roar, then all was quiet.

When at last he struggled back to consciousness he was lying on the ground at the top of the knoll with Miss Clyde still clasped close in his arms. It was a minute before he understood what had happened, and then he raised his head and looked about him, as if to assure himself that it was all real and not a dream.

At that Miss Clyde, too, came back to consciousness, and her eyes opened in surprise and doubt. She looked about till her glance rested on Abe, then she struggled away from him and sat up.

There was still an expression of doubt and perplexity on her features.

For a little while neither spoke, then she said:

"Where am I, and what has happened?"

"You are safe,' he answered.

"Yes, I know. But where am I?"

"You are only a mile from the ranch. You can see it from there."

She looked over to where he pointed, but she was still doubtful and puzzled.

"I can not understand," she said, "how I came to be here."

"You were running from the stampeded cattle," he said, "and your horse threw you, just out there."

"I know. But what happened after that?"

"Nothing, much."

"But there must have. I am here safe and sound, when I expected to be killed. How did it happen?"

"It doesn't matter. I hope you are not hurt?"

"No, I am not hurt. But tell me! Did you go out there and save me?"

"It was nothing.'

"And you carried me here?"

"It was nothing."

She frowned and stamped her foot.

"Why do you say that?" she cried. "Do you think I don't know what it was? You risked your life for me. You saved me from a terrible death. Is all that nothing?"

"Well, it's all right, and I would rather you wouldn't try to think about it. It is all over now, and neither of us is any the worse off for it."

She was silent a moment or so, after which she said suddenly:

"And Daniels. What became of him?"

Abe was glad that there was no solicitude in her voice, still he winced at the question. He hesitated at first, but finally he answered:

"He went on to the ranch, I think."

"And left me to my fate?"

Abe did not reply. There was another silence, then with a blush on her face, she said:

"We have acted foolish long enough, and I am going to take a step that you ought to take. I am going to——"

At that instant Anderson came running up from behind the knoll.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHAT DID SHE MEAN?

Abe did not know what Miss Clyde had started to say, but in his heart he cussed Anderson for breaking in just at that moment. If he had known the purport of her words he would have felt like shooting Anderson on the spot.

Miss Clyde did not finish her sentence, and, though she had plenty of opportunities, she did not refer to it again.

After Anderson, came all the cowboys from the ranch, and a little later, came Daniels. The latter was all solicitude for Miss Clyde, but she ignored him completely, and did not appear to see him or hear a word he said. As old Dick afterward observed:

"She shore cut him dead, and if he didn't feel like about thirty cents less than no money, I don't know why."

Of course they all wanted to know what had happened, and how Miss Clyde had been saved, and everything, but Abe lapsed into dead silence and absolutely refused to tell them anything.

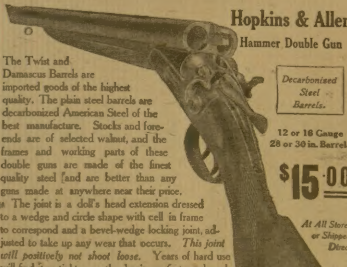
There wasn't much to tell, he reasoned, unless he went to work to make a cheap hero of himself, and he wouldn't do that.

Miss Clyde, however, was not so reticent. She told the whole story of her race, with the cattle following, of her fall, and of how, when Daniels had abandoned her, Abe had come to her rescue at the risk of his own.

For good shooting and quick handling qualities, perfect proportion, correct alignment and balance and the ability to stand up under hard shooting for years without working loose, the

Hopkins & Allen

Double Barrelled Shot-Guns are Unequalled



Hopkins & Allen

Hammer Double Gun

The Twist and Damascus Barrels are imported goods of the highest quality. The plain steel barrels are decarbonized American Steel of the best manufacture. Stocks and fore-ends are of selected walnut, and the frames and working parts of these double guns are made of the finest quality steel and are better than any guns made at anywhere near their price. The joint is a doll's head extension dressed to a wedge and circle shape with cell in frame to correspond and a bevel-wedge locking joint, adjusted to take up any wear that occurs. *This joint will positively not shoot loose.* Years of hard use will find it as tight as on the day it was first purchased.

These guns are regularly in stock in the stores of all representative dealers; but will be gladly shipped direct in cases where a dealer is inaccessible. Each gun is guaranteed safe with all factory-loaded nitro-shells.

Decarbonised Steel Barrels.

12 or 16 Gauge
28 or 30 in. Barrels

$15.00

At All Stores or Shipped Direct

The Hopkins & Allen Gun Guide and Catalogue is the most complete Book on Guns ever issued. It tells you all about rifles, shotguns and revolvers—the sort to own and how to care for them. Every man interested in Firearms should have one. *Sent Free on Request.*

THE HOPKINS & ALLEN ARMS CO., 66 Chestnut St., NORWICH, CONN.

Largest Manufacturers High Grade Popular Priced Firearms in the World

life, and saved her from being trampled to death.

When she had finished there was a moment of tense silence, then, without a word, Anderson walked over to Abe and took his hand in a warm clasp and shook it heartily. Old Andy followed Anderson's example, then came Dick and Shorty. Others were in line to do the same, but all at once the meaning of it seemed to dawn on Abe.

With a grunt of disgust he stood up and thrust his hands behind him. He threw his head up and stood proudly and coldly erect.

"Oh git out," he growled to the next man who extended his hand. "What's the matter with you folks? I ain't no blamed fool."

It was Anderson who answered:

"You may not be a fool," he said, "but you are acting like one now. Darn it, man, don't you know what you have done?"

"Nothing to make any fuss about," Abe growled.

"You have made a hero of yourself, anyway," Anderson said.

Abe gave his shoulders a contemptuous shrug.

"Oh, say," he cried, "don't go to springing any of that sort of rot on me. It's all sickly rubbish and I don't want to hear it."

"Well, that's all right, Abe. You can think what you please, but we have our own ideas."

"Have 'em then, but don't go to making me look sillier than I naturally am. I guess we might as well go back to the ranch."

Then Miss Clyde turned to Abe, and, a little timidly, and with some hesitation, said:

"I don't know whether you will like it or not, but just the same I must thank you for saving my life. I——"

He held up his hand to stop her, and when she disregarded him, and would have gone on, he interrupted by saying:

"Don't! Please, don't! You all make me plumb ashamed. What I done was nothing. Andy, Dick or Shorty, or anybody, would have done the same thing under the circumstances. I wouldn't have been a man if I hadn't done it."

"But anybody didn't do it," Miss Clyde protested.

"Well, they didn't happen to have the chance. That was all that kept them from it. They would have done it if they had been here."

A smile that was half a frown came to Miss Clyde's face. Whether it was accidental, or whether she did it on purpose, her eyes wandered to Daniels' face as he said:

"That may be, but it seems that everybody is not like that. Some people, it appears, can abandon a person in the face of danger."

Everybody knew what she meant, and in an instant every one's eyes were fixed on Daniels. He realized the situation fully, and his face flushed and paled alternately.

For a little while no one spoke, then Abe remarked quietly:

"I was speaking of men."

A moment of intense silence followed. Every one knew the meaning of Abe's words, and they may have expected something more serious to follow. Every man of them knew what would happen were he in Daniels' place. And there would have been no hesitation, either. Somebody would have been hurt.

But Daniels did not move. He shot Abe a venomous look, a look full of hatred, and of ill-boding. With that he contented himself for the time being. There were other days coming.

Presently some one let a light laugh escape him. In an instant a hardly suppressed titter went through the crowd.

Daniels, with all his cheek and gall, could not stand that. Turning on his heel he strode away toward the ranch. They [illegible] in on their [illegible] and presently old Dick swore under his breath.

"The onery, sneaking coward!" he muttered.

Every man there agreed with him, and were anxious to express their feelings in stronger language still, but they remembered Miss Clyde and remained silent. They detested him for his last piece of cowardice, but they [illegible] that she [illegible] to become his wife.

It was fortunate for Daniels that she was present, and that the cowboys had that idea [illegible]. Otherwise he would certainly have learned in no uncertain manner what they thought of him and his conduct. He might have considered himself very fortunate if they had confined the expression of contempt to mere words.

They all went back to the ranch, but Abe fell behind and walked alone. One and another tried to engage him in conversation, but he had nothing to say. They knew him well enough to let him alone when he was like this.

So he came on with no company save his thoughts. And his thoughts were all of one thing.

What had she started to say when Anderson interrupted her by suddenly appearing on the scene?

This was the question Abe asked himself over and over, and for an answer to which he would have given the world.

The continuation of this splendid story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to [illegible] during the coming [illegible]. With every subscription we send entirely free of cost one of our splendid King Cameras or any six of our splendid patterns. See pages thirteen and fifteen.

FAMILY FOOD

Crisp, Toothsome and Requires No Cooking.

A little boy down in N. C., asked his mother to write an account of how Grape-Nuts food had helped their family.

She says Grape-Nuts was first brought to her attention on a visit to Charlotte, where she visited the mayor of that city who was using the food by the advice of his physician. She says:

"They derived so much good from it that they never pass a day without using it. While I was there I used the Food regularly. I gained about 15 pounds and felt so well that when I returned home I began using Grape-Nuts in our family regularly.

"My little 18-months-old baby shortly after being weaned was very ill with dyspepsia and teething. She was sick nine weeks and we tried everything. She became so emaciated that it was painful to handle her and we thought we were going to lose her. One day a happy thought urged me to try Grape-Nuts soaked in a little warm milk.

"Well, it worked like a charm and she began taking it regularly and improvement set in at once. She is now getting well and round and fat as fast as possible on Grape-Nuts.

"Sometime ago several of the family were stricken with LaGrippe at the same time, and during the worst stages we could not relish anything in the shape of food but Grape-Nuts and oranges, everything else nauseated us.

"We all appreciate what your famous food has done for our family." "There's a Reason." Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Long Canine.

Noah came out of the animal quarters.

"Clear the deck from bow to stern!" he bellowed.

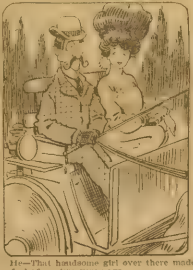
"What's going on, dad?" grumbled Ham, as he reached for his fishing pole and bait can.

"Oh, nothing much; only the dachshund is coming out to stretch himself."

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.



He—That handsome girl over there made a fool of me two years ago.

She—I felt sure that something happened in your past life that you never got over.

Thought It Was for Him.

A coutryman who was walking along a certain street the other day stopped in front of a fire station and looked in.

"Have many fires in this town?" he inquired of one of the firemen standing at the door.

"We have 'em pretty often," replied the other.

"Do you have to go to all of them?"

"No, not unless they're in our district, or unless there's a general alarm."

"Ever try to see how quick you can hitch up?"

"O, yes."

At that instant there came an alarm. At the first stroke of the gong the men ran to their posts, the doors of the stalls opened, the horses ran out and were quickly hitched to the hose cart, and within a few seconds men, horses and cart were out of the door and speeding down the street.

The interested young man watched the performance with undisguised admiration.

"By gum!" he exclaimed. "That's something like! There ain't a town in the whole of the country where they'd go to all that trouble to show a stranger what they can do.

Jesse James' Son.

Jesse James, the noted outlaw's son, is, at the age of 30, one of the most talented and respected lawyers of Kansas City.

In a claim case that he recently won, Mr. James told an amusing story.

"There was a woman," he said, "whose husband was killed in a railroad accident. The railroad, to avoid suit, gave her $[illegible]000 damages.

"The sum satisfied the woman, but a month or two afterward, taking up a newspaper, she read about [illegible] who had lost [illegible] leg in the same [illegible] and behold [illegible] man was given [illegible] damages to the amount of $[illegible].

"It made the woman mad. She hastened at once to the office of the railway's claim adjuster. She said bitterly:

"'How's this? Here you give a man $7,500 for the loss of his leg, while you only gave me $5,000 for the loss of my husband.'

"The claim adjuster smiled amiably, and said in a soothing voice:

"'Madame, the reason is quite plain. The [illegible]00 won't provide the poor man with a new leg, whereas with your $5,000 you can easily get a new husband, and perhaps a [illegible].'"

Necessary Precaution.

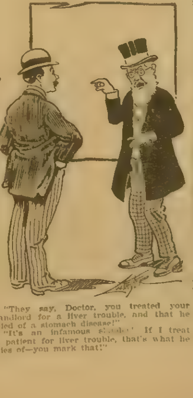
Tramp (at kitchen door)—That cake smells temptin'.

Cook—It's some the cookin'-school young leddies made—twinty things mixed wid forty things.

Tramp—I wish I had some.

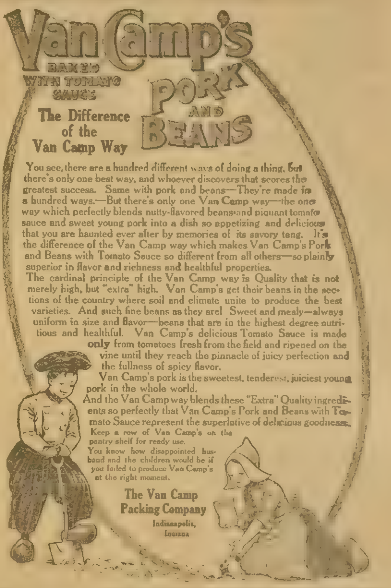
Cook—Wull, Oi'll give ye a piece if ye'll ate it outdoors. Oi don't want ye to die in th' house.

No Escape.



"They say, Doctor, you treated your landlord for a liver trouble, and that he died of a stomach disease!"

"It's an infamous slander! If I treat a patient for liver trouble, that's what he dies of—you mark that!"



The Difference of the Van Camp Way

You see, there are a hundred different ways of doing a thing, but there's only one best way, and whoever discovers that scores the greatest success. Same with pork and beans—They're made in a hundred ways.—But there's only one Van Camp way—the one way which perfectly blends nutty-flavored beans and piquant tomato sauce and sweet young pork into a dish so appetizing and delicious that you are haunted ever after by memories of its savory tang. It's the difference of the Van Camp way which makes Van Camp's Pork and Beans with Tomato Sauce so different from all others—so plainly superior in flavor and richness and healthful properties.

The cardinal principle of the Van Camp way is Quality that is not merely high, but "extra" high. Van Camp's get their beans in the sections of the country where soil and climate unite to produce the best varieties. And such fine beans as they are! Sweet and mealy—always uniform in size and flavor—beans that are in the highest degree nutritious and healthful. Van Camp's delicious Tomato Sauce is made **only** from tomatoes fresh from the field and ripened on the vine until they reach the pinnacle of juicy perfection and the fullness of spicy flavor.

Van Camp's pork is the sweetest, tenderest, juiciest young pork in the whole world.

And the Van Camp way blends these "Extra" Quality ingredients so perfectly that Van Camp's Pork and Beans with Tomato Sauce represent the superlative of delicious goodness.

Keep a row of Van Camp's on the pantry shelf for ready use.

You know how disappointed husband and the children would be if you failed to produce Van Camp's at the right moment.

The Van Camp Packing Company
Indianapolis,
Indiana

How They Marry.

[illegible] And s[illegible] married! She was th[illegible] Did she make a wise ch[illegible]

Hostess—About as wise as wom[illegible] ally make. You kn[illegible], she was d[illegible] society—one of th[illegible] beins and breath[illegible] in a whirl of excite[illegible] she was scarcely ever without h[illegible] companions.

Returned Tourist—Yes, [illegible]

Hostess—Well, she mar[illegible] keeper.

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Horrors of Mormonism.

Small Son—Ma, what's Mormons?

Mother—Um—men who have a good many wives.

Small Son—A good many?

Mother—Yes, thirty or forty sometimes.

Small Son—Ooo! That's awful!

Mother—Yes, my son.

Small Son—Just awful! I wouldn't like to have thirty or forty mamas to spank me.

Map of the World 25 Cents.

A beautiful map, valuable for reference printed on heavy paper, 42x63 inches, mounted on rollers, edges bound in cloth, showing our new island possessions, the Trans-Siberian Railway, Pacific Ocean, cables, railway [illegible] of Ja[illegible] China [illegible] [illegible] stamps by W. P. K[illegible] Chicago & North-Western Ry., Chicago, Ill.

Oof!

"Were you ever rescued by a brave, strong man?" asked Miss Oldham after the hero had carried her out of the water.

"No," replied Miss Pertleigh. "I have never found it necessary to get wet for the purpose of inducing a man to put his arms around me."

A Dainty Little Maid.

Every one ought to have her. She is dressed in pretty colors and changes the color of her skirt herself when it is going to rain. She indicates when it is wise to take an umbrella or when you can do without. She is the simplest and best of barometers. She is an ornament, a good seller for agents, a pretty gift, a good business souvenir and useful to any one. She or one of her sisters comes postpaid with full directions for only 10 cents. W. P. Randolph & Co., [illegible] Dearborn St., Chicago.

It Never Makes Her Mad.

It is pretty hard to offend a woman by letting her overhear you wonder how so beautiful a creature could ever have been won by such a shrimp as her husband is.

BOY'S
AND
GIRL'S
CORNER

UNCLE SAM'S MESSENGER;

Or, THE BOY WHO FOUND GARCIA. By *S. A. D. COX.*

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CHAPTER XIX.

BOUND FOR CUBA

Ben went to the store the next morning, and found Joe on hand. He had given Joe the key the evening before, and that youth was on hand early, eager to start in on his new career.

He had swept and dusted, and everything looked spick and span and clean as a whistle.

"Good morning, Joe," greeted Ben, cheerily.

"Good morning, old fellow."

"How do you think you are going to like it?"

"Oh, fine!"

"I'm glad of that."

"No more carrying messages for mine, Ben."

"I know how you feel. You are too big for that business, anyway."

"Yes, so I am. This is nearer my size," with a grin.

"Yes, and you'll like it more and more the longer you keep at it."

"I don't doubt it."

Ben stayed and talked to Joe, giving him instructions and information about the stock and prices, etc.

About nine o'clock the chief of the secret service came in. He had a package under his arm, and he handed it to Ben, with the remark:

"Try them on."

Ben nodded, and went back to the rear of the store and sat down and removed the shoes he had been wearing, and donned the new ones—for this was the pair of shoes that he had bought the day before and left with the chief, in his office.

"Are they all right?" the chief asked.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

He had followed Ben back to the rear, and now he stooped and whispered:

"The message is in the sole of the right shoe. Whatever you do, don't lose that shoe."

"I won't, sir. I'll hang onto that, come what may."

"That's right. Well, I won't see you again before you go, so will say good-bye. This business is not exactly in my line, you know; I simply got mixed up with it, because I was asked to find some one who would be a good person to send on this mission. The President thought that I would be likely to be able to do this."

"I understand. I shall try to prove that your choice was not a bad one, sir."

"I am sure of that, Ben. Well, good-bye, and good luck to you."

"Thank you; good-bye."

The chief shook hands with Ben, and then hastened out and away.

Ben stayed at the store until ten o'clock, and then shook hands with Joe and bade him good-bye.

"You won't be back, then?" queried Joe.

"No, I won't see you again before I go."

"Well, take good care of yourself, Ben."

"I will; and you look after the business here, old fellow."

"You may be sure I'll do that. I'll look after it as carefully as if it were my own."

"I know you will, Joe. Well, good-bye."

They shook hands again at the door, and Ben hastened away in the direction of his home.

Lucy Mayberry was there, and the four sat down and talked earnestly for an hour; and then Mrs. Bolton and Alice went to work to get dinner, leaving Ben and Lucy together.

"Oh, Ben!" said Lucy, soberly, "I—I—wish that you—were not—going."

"Oh, you oughtn't to wish that, Lucy," said the youth. "Just think of the honor that as been done me in selecting me for such an important mission; and think of the glory that will be mine if I perform it successfully."

"Ye-es, I know," doubtfully; "that is all right, but suppose you—you—should never—never—return!"

Ben slipped his arm around the girl's waist, kissed her, and said, soothingly:

"Don't you worry, little sweetheart, I'll come back, all right."

"Oh, Ben, I hope so!" breathed Lucy.

They talked on till dinner was announced by Mrs. Bolton. Then Lucy leaped up and said she must go home.

"I ought to have been there, helping mother get our dinner," she said but, I—I—couldn't go."

"And you're not going now," said Mrs. Bolton. "I have placed a plate for you, and you are going to stay to have dinner with us."

A look of pleasure appeared on Lucy's face.

"Oh, thank you, Mrs. Bolton!" she exclaimed. "But, I am afraid that I shall be imposing on your good nature. You want to have Ben to yourselves a little while, before he goes away, don't you?"

"Well," with a smile "I consider that it is that way, now. We are pretty nearly one family, aren't we?"

Lucy blushed, and Ben laughed and remarked:

"We are going to be some day, mother, if Lucy is willing."

The girl blushed still more, and when Alice said, mischievously, "You are willing, aren't you, Lucy?" the girl nodded and said.

"Yes, I guess that I am."

"Good for you, Lucy!" exclaimed Ben; "and here's a kiss to seal the bargain."

"And mother and I are witnesses," laughed Alice.

Then they sat up to the table and ate their dinner. They were all as lively and cheerful as they could be, for Ben wanted to go away leaving his loved ones thinking that he did not consider the mission a dangerous one, or a serious affair at all; and they on their part wanted to send him away in as cheerful a frame of mind as possible.

When dinner was over they sat in the sitting room and talked until one o'clock, and then Ben said he must go.

His mother cautioned him to take good care of himself, and the girls did the same, and after promising that he would do so, he kissed them again and again and grabbing up his bundle—he was taking nothing save a couple of changes of underwear in addition to the clothing he had on—he hastened out of the house and away.

The three followed him to the gate, and watched him down the street till he reached the avenue. Here he turned and waved his hand, and they waved their hands in response, after whiched he plunged around the corner and disappeared from view.

Would he ever come back to them? Had they seen the bright, handsome, manly and energetic youth for the last time?

They hoped not, and mentally prayed that such would not be the case.

They hastened into the house and did their best to comfort one another, though only with fair success.

Meanwhile Ben walked down the avenue with light, springy steps. It had torn his heart to part from his loved ones, but now that the parting was over, he dismissed all thoughts of it from his mind, and thought only of the work that lay before him.

On he went, and in a little more than half an hour he was on board the cruiser Albemarle. Smoke was pouring from the smokestack, and it was evident that the vessel was ready to get underway.

Ben, as will be remembered, was acquainted with the captain and officers of the Albemarle, as well as with the sailor, Jack Marble, so he would feel at home on the vessel.

The captain greeted Ben cordially and shook hands with him. Evidently he understood everything and had his orders, for he said:

"You are on time, my boy."

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"And you are all ready to start?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Very good we will get under way at once."

He gave the orders and then led the way to the cabin, two or three of the officers greeting Ben pleasantly before he entered, and two more, who were in there, shaking hands with him.

The captain then threw open the door of a stateroom at the end of the cabin, and said:

"This will be your room, my boy. Just make yourself at home."

"Thank you, sir," said Ben. I'll leave my bundle in there," and he placed his bundle in a rack on the wall and then came out and closed the door.

The captain and officers had gone out on deck, and Ben followed.

The ship was under way and was moving down the Potomac at a good rate of speed.

The captain and first officer were on the bridge, and the other officers were standing aft.

Ben joined them and stood looking back at the city of Washington, which was gradually dropping away into the distance.

He was now fully embarked upon his secret mission for the President of the United States.

He was bound for Cuba, for the home of the people who were battling for their freedom.

He was carrying a message to Garcia the same as Lieutenant Rowen had done before him.

Would he be as successful as the lieutenant had been? He set his teeth grimly together and made up his mind that he would be, if such a thing were possible.

CHAPTER XX.

ALONE ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT.

The voyage to Cuba was a very pleasing experience for Ben. He loved the water, and the swift-going cruiser, spick, span, neat and clean was a joy and delight.

The cruiser hove to about fifteen miles off the north coast of Cuba, about the middle of the afternoon, and lay there till after nightfall.

"It's going to be a dark night," said the captain, as they were at supper! "and that will be good, as it will enable us to land you without danger of being discovered."

"Yes, sir," said Ben; "that will be a big advantage for me, for then I can tell my story about having deserted from a sailing vessel, and no one can have any reason to disbelieve me."

The captain and officers were very kind to Ben on this evening; so far as that was concerned, they had been kind to him all the time, but on this evening they were almost tender toward him. They knew something about Cuba, and realized, much more clearly than was the case with Ben, the difficult and dangerous task that lay before him.

When darkness had fully settled over all, the cruiser was gotten under way, and headed in till within a mile of the shore, then a boat was lowered and manned, and after the captain and officers had shaken hands with Ben and wished him good luck, he descended the ladder and took his place in the boat.

He took nothing with him save enough cold food for a couple of meals.

He had no weapons, as they would not have been in accordance with the character of a deserter from a sailing vessel. A common sailor would not have weapons.

Jack Marble was one of those who rowed Ben ashore, and when the youth left the boat, the sailor shook hands with him and wished him the best of luck.

"Take good care of yourself, mate," he said. "Don't let the Spaniards get ye."

"I'll do the best I can, Jack," was the reply. "Good-bye."

Then Marble climbed back into the boat, and the sailors pulled away toward the cruiser, leaving Ben standing alone on the shore. It was so dark he could not see the boat after it was ten yards distant, but he could hear the sound of the oars, and as long as he could hear this he listened eagerly; but at last the sound was no longer distinguishable, and the youth gave a sigh.

He as alone on a strange land, at night. What perils might be surrounding him he had no means of knowing; but he did know that he would meet them bravely, come what might.

Then, too, he felt the weight of the responsibility that rested upon his shoulders. He was here on a most important mission—that of delivering a message to General Garcia.

Lieutenant Rowen had done this same thing successfully, two months before; well, so would he!

Ben made up his mind that he would find Garcia and deliver the message, or die trying.

It was so dark that he could not see a rod in front of him, and he did not fancy trying to make his way through the wilds in the night, so he decided to remain where he was till morning.

Making his way well up on the beach, he lay down on the sand, and was soon asleep.

He slept till morning, and when he awoke it was just coming daylight.

He arose to a sitting posture and looked around him.

Before him were the blue waters of the Gulf, and Ben's eyes swept them for some sign of the cruiser; but the vessel was nowhere to be seen, nor was there a vessel of any kind in sight.

Then he turned and looked shoreward. There he was confronted by a heavy growth of timber, with so much of underbrush that it resembled a veritable jungle. No human being, other than himself, was in sight, and Ben opened the package of food and ate heartily.

"I guess I'll need all the strength I can muster up," was his thought.

Having finished eating, he made his way to a little stream that emptied into the Gulf, not far from where he had spent the night, and drank his fill, the water being very good indeed.

Then he gave one long, lingering look over the beautiful blue waters of the Gulf, and turning, plunged resolutely into the jungle.

He made his way along as best he could, but his progress was not very rapid. He kept onward, however, hoping that he might presently strike something resembling a road, which would render progress less difficult.

As the sun got higher, it grew oppressively hot, and Ben had to stop frequently to rest and get his breath.

He kept going till noon, and then he stopped beside a small stream and ate some more of the food and drank from the stream, after which he lay down in the shade and rested for more than an hour.

Then he got up and resumed his journey. It was slow and hard work, but Ben persevered. He was not going to let fatigue and discomfort discourage him or hold him back.

At last the afternoon drew to a close, and Ben began to look around for some place to stay that night. He did not like the idea of sleeping in the jungle, but he feared that he would have to do so.

A little later on he came upon a sort of path, and he followed this eagerly, hoping that it would lead him to a human habitation.

His hopes were realized, for just as the sun was sinking out of sight below the tree tops to the westward he came upon a little

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STAR MONTHLY 133 Hunter St., OAK PARK, ILL.

cabin standing on the bank of a brook. The cabin was in a little open space of perhaps an acre in extent.

Ben hastened forward, and when he reached the cabin he noted that the door was standing open, and he glanced in.

There was no one there. The one little room was untenanted.

Ben was greatly disappointed, for he was beginning to feel the need of human companionship. He had never before had any experience of wandering alone amid the solitudes of a dense jungle, and it was beginning to get onto his nerves.

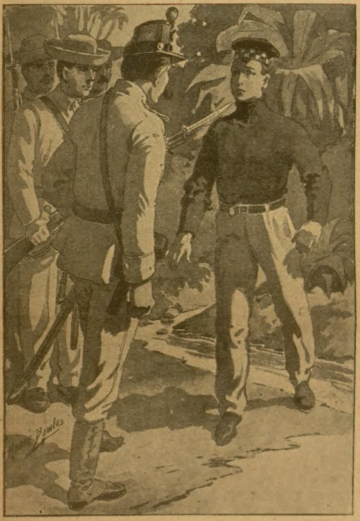
"Oh, well, I'll stay here all night, anyway," he murmured; "I have some of the food left, and will have a shelter over my head, and that will beat lying out in the open air."

He ate about half of the food, and then drank out of the brook, after which he brought in some small boughs and leaves and made him a bed in one corner, and as it was now dark, and he was almost tired out, he lay down and was soon asleep.

He was awakened several times during the night by the cries of wild animals, and he shuddered and was very glad that he had the shelter of the little hut, with a door, weak though it was, between himself and the beasts of prey.

He was up soon after daylight next morning, and as it was rather close in the hut, he stepped out and sat down on a log to eat the remainder of the food.

When he had finished he went to the brook and lay down and drank his fill, after which he arose to his feet and turned again toward the cabin—to find himself standing face to face with a score of Spanish soldiers, each and every one of whom held a Mauser rifle leveled!



"Who are you?"

CHAPTER XXI.

IN THE HANDS OF THE SPANIARDS.

Ben stood there, staring in open-mouthed amazement and dismay.

He was taken completely by surprise, for he had not heard a sound to warn him of the presence of any one in the vicinity. Evidently the soldiers had stolen forward on tiptoe, while Ben was lying down, drinking.

One of the soldiers, a lieutenant, Ben guessed, as he wore an officer's uniform—spoke to the youth, but in Spanish, and of course Ben could not understand.

The youth shook his head, and said, "I don't understand."

The lieutenant smiled and said, in very good English:

"Who are you?"

"Oh, you speak English!" exclaimed Ben; "good! My name is Ben Bolton, sir."

"Where do you live?"

"In the United States."

The lieutenant frowned and then went on:

"Why are you here, in Cuba, alone in the forest?"

"It is this way, sir," said Ben. "You see, I was a sailor on a sailing vessel, and the captain took a dislike to me and beat me at every opportunity, and I was afraid he would kill me, so night before last, soon after dark, I got into the small boat and made my escape."

"Ah, a deserter, eh?"

"Yes."

"This vessel you escaped from was an American vessel?"

"Yes, sir; but it was a tramp ship, and was bound for Australia, and I didn't want to go."

"Humph! Why are you so far inland?"

"I was afraid that the captain would send some of the men ashore to look for me, sir, and so I struck out inland and just kept on going. In fact, I got lost, and had to keep on going or die of starvation sooner or later."

"Humph!" The lieutenant eyed Ben keenly. It was plain that he was a bit suspicious.

He spoke to his men and evidently told them what Ben had told him, for the soldiers talked among themselves and eyed Ben closely.

"Well," said the lieutenant, after a few moments; "I guess we shall be obliged to take you along with us."

"Where to?" queried Ben.

"To our encampment."

"Where is it?"

"About two miles," pointing with his finger, to indicate the direction.

"Very well, I will go."

"Yes, of course you will," smiling grimly. "You have no choice in the matter."

Ben started.

"You mean—"

"That you will go as a prisoner, yes."

Ben turned pale. He did not fancy this, at all. If they made a prisoner of him and took him to their encampment, they might hold him there for days and weeks, and he would be delayed in reaching Garcia. This would be bad, but it would of course be unavoidable. He could not fight a score, and would have to submit.

"You won't make me a prisoner in reality, wi[illegible]you?" he queried. "I will merely be a prisoner in name."

The officer shook his head.

"You will be a prisoner in reality," he said. [illegible]How do we know that you are not a spy, working in the interest of the rebels? There are many Americans down here, fighting with the rebels and against us."

"Is that so?" remarked Ben, simulating surprise.

"It is; and you may be on your way to join Garcia for all I know."

"Garcia!" exclaimed Ben, pretending that he did not know there was such a person in existence, in the hope of learning something of his whereabouts; "who is Garcia?"

The lieutenant looked at him sharply.

"Have you ever heard of him?" he queried.

Ben scratched his head and pondered—or pretended to do so.

"It seems to me that I have heard of him," he then said; "you see, I have been away a long time, on a voyage. We were at Cape Town, then came across to Rio Janeiro, then to Panama, and were heading back for Australia, when I deserted. So I haven't heard much news from the United States for a long time."

"Humph! Garcia is the leader of the rebels on this island, and he is encamped in the hills ten miles from here—yonder," pointing. "But, we are going to have him, sooner or later. We will capture him and put him to death, and that will end the affair."

"I should think that it would end it," agreed Ben.

"You are sure that you were not on your way to join him and his rebels?" with a keen, searching glance.

"Oh, yes, sir; I am sure of it," was the prompt reply.

"Very good; I hope that you speak the truth—for your own sake!"

Then he gave a command to one of his men in Spanish, and the soldiers advanced and tied Ben's wrists together with a huge bandana handkerchief. Then he went through Ben's pockets and emptied them of their contents—which was not much. A penknife, a couple of keys, a few pieces of silver; that was about all.

The lieutenant pocketed these and then gave a command in Spanish, and the little party moved away through the forest, with Ben in its midst.

They soon came to a rude trail and made their way along it a distance of nearly two miles, when they came out into an open space of several acres in extent, on the shore of a little lake. It was a pretty spot, and one well suited for a camp.

Near the center of the encampment were four large tents, and to one of these Ben was conducted by the lieutenant. When they were inside, Ben saw that they were in the presence of a high official, probably a general.

The lieutenant, after saluting, talked to the officer a few minutes, and pointed toward Ben frequently. It was plain that he was explaining matters, and telling what he knew, or thought that he knew, about Ben.

It transpired that the general could speak English, also, for he addressed Ben, asking him a few questions, covering points that the lieutenant had not covered.

Ben answered with apparent frankness, and the officer finally said:

"You may be telling the truth, young man, but we have no proof that such is the case, so the only thing for me to do is to hold you a prisoner."

Ben's heart sank. He had hoped that he might be set free.

"I am sorry, sir," he said. "I was in hopes that you would let me go my way."

"Where would you go if you were free?"

"Across to the north side, and try to get a berth on a ship, sir."

"Humph! Well, we can't set you free. You may be telling the truth, and then again you may be a rebel spy."

Ben saw that it would be useless to argue or plead, and so he said no more.

He was conducted to one side and placed under guard.

Ben now had plenty of time to think matters over.

He felt that he was in a serious predicament. Even though he were not in any danger of losing his life, he would be delayed greatly, and might not reach General Garcia until after days and even weeks had elapsed, and then it might turn out that he was too late for the message to be of value.

He decided that he must try to escape.

This would be a difficult thing to accomplish, but it would not be an impossibility, he was confident. The nights were dark, and he felt that he ought to be able to get loose and slip away in a night or two.

At noon he was brought some food, and a soldier stood near him, rifle in hand, while he ate; and when he had finished, his wrists were bound once more.

Soon afterward a soldier came up, and

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after conversing with the guard a few moments, advanced and began to unlace Ben's shoes.

The youth's heart almost stood still.

Had the Spaniards learned in some manner that he was carrying a message hidden in the sole of one of the shoes?

It would seem so!

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The Fatal Millions.

(Continued from page seven.)

"Yes," he replied. "The nurse tells me I have been ill. How long have I been ill, Mary?"

"Six weeks, Winston."

"Six weeks!" A look of horror and agony unspeakable, suddenly convulsed his white, wasted face. "My wife!" he whispered, while his breath came in gasps. "Oh, God! what have they done with her? She——"

"Oh, Winston, don't look that way," cried Mary Dungard. "Your wife is safe."

"Safe?" he repeated. "How can that be when—No, you are trying to deceive me. It—it is all over perhaps."

A death-like pallor overspread his face.

"Winston, listen to me," cried Mary, desperately. "Your wife is safe. In some mysterious way she escaped two weeks after her conviction and all efforts to find her have failed."

"Safe! Oh, thank God!" murmured Winston, and from that moment he began steadily to mend.

It was true, Nesta Dungard had escaped. Her cell was found empty one morning and the warden in charge that night was also missing. He was a man about sixty and had held his present position for over fifteen years. That he had been approached from outside was, of course, the only deduction to be drawn. But there it ended, for there was absolutely no clue as to the person or persons who had brought about Nesta Dungard's escape. Suspicion might have rested upon Winston Dungard, the condemned woman's husband, had he not been at the time ill of brain fever. The entire affair was most mysterious and completely baffled the authorities. The escape had evidently been cleverly planned and skillfully carried out. Not a trace of the fugitives could be discovered.

When Winston Dungard recovered he was constantly shadowed by a detective, and, when he embarked on a steamer bound for England, the detective went also. It was soon apparent, however, that Winston Dungard had not gone to join his fugitive wife. He went direct to London, where it appeared he had secured a position in a banking house which had formerly been a branch of Dungard & Edmondson. He was kept under surveillance for some time, but nothing came of it. The excitement attending the mysterious escape gradually died out and the authorities in time relaxed in their efforts to discover the fugitives.

Four months after the tragic death of her husband, Gratia Dungard gave birth to a child, whose tiny body was misshapen and distorted. The young mother was very ill and it was a long time before they dared let her see the child.

She looked at it for some moments in silence with an odd calmness.

"Will it live?" she asked, at length, of the nurse.

"Yes, ma'am, it will live, I think, though it's rather puny," the woman replied.

Gratia turned her head wearily on the pillow.

"Take it away, please," she said.

"She wants it to die," the nurse thought to herself, as she carried the baby away. "I have seen mothers as fairly doted on poor little afflicted things like this, but she ain't one of those kind. Well, I guess it would be better off dead."

Mary Dungard came into the nursery looking pale and nervous.

"Well, how did she take it, nurse?" she asked.

"Well, ma'am, she took it very quiet like. It was quite a relief to me for I was afraid that she might take on pretty bad. She asked me if I thought it would live. I told her yes, and then she told me to take it away."

Mary looked down at the baby's little twisted form and shuddered.

"It would be a blessing if God saw fit to take it," she said.

CHAPTER XIX.
A WOMAN'S LAUGH.

Four years later.

On an evening in December Mrs. Compton, one of the leaders in the smart set, gave a ball at which it was rumored Mrs. Dungard would be present. It would be her first appearance in society since the tragic death of her husband.

By ten o'clock Mrs. Compton's spacious and elegant rooms were filling rapidly.

Mrs. Contare and Hugh Delavan were standing together near the door leading into the ballroom. The latter had spent much of his time abroad during the past four years. He was very successful as an artist and his pictures commanded high prices. A painting of his at a recent art exhibition in New York was being talked about, and raved over by the critics.

The picture represented a young mother kneeling beside the dead body of her baby. The child lay upon a couch covered with white violets. There was a smile on the sweet baby face, but the dimpled form had the stiff rigidness of death. The tiny hands were folded about the stem of a white lily. Half-kneeling, half-crouching beside the couch was the mother. Her long black robes swept the floor and over them flowed the heavy masses of her rich auburn hair, the jeweled comb, that had confined it, gleamed vividly against the somber draperies of her gown in which it had been caught. One could fancy the agony of the mother's face from the hand which clutched the white drapery of the couch and the abandonment of her form. The coloring and realism of the picture were marvelous.

Mrs. Contare was speaking of the painting and the artist was listening in a half-abstracted manner, while his eyes were fixed upon the entrance to the ballroom. A subtle change swept across his face as Gratia Dungard came into the room.

"Oh, there is Mrs. Dungard!" exclaimed Alma Contare, "and how beautiful she is!"

She was lovely beyond compare. The years had ripened her beauty to glorious perfection. She wore a white silk gown with a great bunch of gold-colored roses against one white, dazzling shoulder. About her neck she wore a necklace of topazes linked together with diamonds.

As she moved up the room toward the hostess, seemingly unconscious of the attention she was attracting, Hugh Delavan turned to Mrs. Contare. There was a flush on his face and his eyes had a strange light.

"Will you waltz?" he asked.

She glanced at him curiously as she laid her hand on his arm. She had never seen him look just that way before.

As she floated around the room in his arms to the soft sensuous music, her heart beat quicker and her pulses quickened. At length she stopped near the door leading into the conservatory.

"I am tired," she said, and led the way into the conservatory.

She sank down upon a couch and lifted her face to his as he stood beside her. She had grown very pale, but there was no mistaking the look in her eyes, as she softly murmured his name:

"Hugh!"

He started and their eyes met as he looked quickly down into her face. A flush rose over the pallor of her face, her lips quivered, her eyes wavered and fell.

He did not love her, but she was very beautiful in her passionate abandonment, and, for the moment, she appealed irresistibly to the man's nature within him. He bent over her and whispered her name, passionately:

"Alma!"

Suddenly he started away from her as a woman's low, silvery laugh had suddenly broken the perfumed, dreamy stillness. The next moment Gratia Dungard came toward them, followed by a tall, good-looking man with whom she had been dancing. She paused just before reaching Alma Contare and Delavan, beside a gorgeous Eastern plant and lifted her bare, gleaming arms to draw its flame-like blossoms caressingly toward her.

"I wonder if Mrs. Dungard is given to posing?" murmured Mrs. Contare.

Hugh Delavan shrugged his shoulders. There was no trace in his eyes of the passion that had lighted them a moment before as he turned toward Mrs. Contare.

"Why should any woman so exquisite as Mrs. Dungard pose?" he remarked, quietly.

"True!" murmured Mrs. Contare. She paused a moment and then added, "You admire her very much, do you not?"

He smiled.

"Is it possible for any one not to admire her?"

Just then Mrs. Compton came into the conservatory and approached Mrs. Contare. She looked disturbed and pale as she paused beside Alma.

"Mrs Contare, they have just telephoned for you to return home immediately," she said, "your husband has met with an accident."

Alma paled.

"Is he dead?" she asked, quietly.

"Oh, no, it isn't as bad as that," Mrs. Compton replied, quickly. "Your butler said that Mr. Contare had been thrown from his automobile and injured."

"I must go at once," said Alma, a little mechanically.

"Let me take you to the dressing-room," said Delavan.

She took his arm. Neither spoke until the dressing-room door was reached. Then Hugh Delavan said gently:

"I trust that Mr. Contare is not badly hurt."

"Thank you," she murmured, but she did not look at him as she spoke.

"Shall I not wait for you?" he asked, as she was turning away.

"No, I would rather you did not," she replied, and then she passed into the dressing-room.

The butler opened the door for Alma Contare when she reached her home.

"Is Mr. Contare badly hurt, Conyers?" she asked.

The man hesitated slightly before replying.

"I fear that he is, ma'am," he replied, at length.

"How did the accident occur?"

"Mr. Contare started for Philadelphia this evening, ma'am, in his automobile. I don't exactly know how it happened, but the automobile went over an embankment and Mr. Contare and the chauffeur were both thrown out. Mr. Contare is, I believe, internally injured."

Alma Contare went slowly upstairs and into the room where her husband lay. She looked strangely out of place in that still, hushed chamber, for Herbert Contare was dying. One glance at his face told her that, as she moved to the bed and knelt down. There were two physicians in the room and several of the servants.

A sudden light came into the dimming eyes of the dying man as they rested on her face.

"Alma, my wife, my darling!" he murmured, and, in that moment Alma Contare realized, for the first time, how dearly in his silent, unobtrusive way Herbert Contare had loved her. She realized also how the indifference, which she had made but little effort to conceal, must have caused him to suffer. She remembered his unvarying kindness, his gentleness, his forbearance and a pang, that was half-remorse, pierced her heart. She knew how implicitly he had trusted her and that she had been false to him in heart, if not in action.

She bent over him and laid her soft cheek to his pale, cold one.

"Are you suffering much, dear?" she asked.

He smiled.

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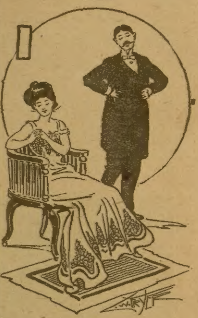

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She—You don't find them on monuments, but under them.

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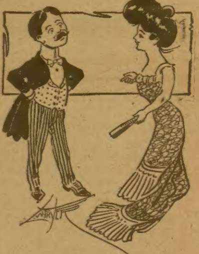
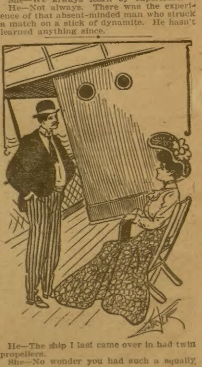


She—We always learn by experience.

He—Not always. There was the experience of that absent-minded man who struck a match on a stick of dynamite. He hasn't learned anything since.



He—The ship I last came over in had twin propellers.

She—No wonder you had such a squally passage.

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STUMP'S POLITICAL CAREER.

BY MAX ADELER.

"What business are you engaged in, Mr. Stump?" I asked of that gentleman when he called on me the other day, to get some information about a remedy for rheumatism which he heard that I had used with good effect.

"Well," he said, scratching his head thoughtfully, "not much of anything just at present. Most of my life I've followed the profession of a candidate; been in politics, running for this thing and that, pressing my claims on the public, and trying to save the country; but I never had any success to brag of.

"Now, when I was a young man, I had a notion I could git elected President. I had fixed it in my mind that me and Dan'l Webster should be put on the same ticket, and I felt if the Whig's go before the country with 'Stump and Webster' as their war-cry, Dan'l and me could sail right into the White House. Somehow, though, I never could git those politicians to see it. One man voted for me in the convention, but they said it was the doorkeeper, and he was drunk. So I saw it was no use, and I began to work the Legislature to git elected United States Senator. I spent a thousand dollars down there trying to set the thing up, and the whole lot went back on me, and picked out a rich old buzzard who hadn't half the merit I had.

"So then I gave it up, and I concluded to try to be mayor of this here town. I got up petitions, and paid for brass bands to give me complimentary serenades, and I worked up the enthusiasm so's it seemed's if I would go into that office a-snorting. Then the fellers that was running the convention cheated me out of the nomination, and I bolted, and appealed to the people. I ran as an independent candidate. It was the most exciting election you ever saw. Everybody was fairly wild. I'd 'a' bet my life on getting a majority. But when they counted the returns, I only had three votes. I know there must 'a' been cheating, because I voted for myself—that was one; and my brother Bill, he voted for me three times—that was four. Robbed, sir! Gouged right out of it! That's the way these politicians play it on the public.

"Then I made up my mind that the coronership was the place for me, and I was nominated. That was an off year in politics, and the party was beaten for the first time in ten years; so's I was pretty hard up, I said I'd take a job as constable. But I don't know how it was. They laid me out somehow, and Jim Bacchus got the place. So, then, the mayor kinder took compassion on me, and appointed me dog-catcher.

"Dog-catcher, mind you! A man who, if he'd 'a' had his own, would 'a' run for President, with Dan'l Webster for vice—a man who'd been serving his country in public life for thirty-five or forty years, fetched up at the end of his career as a grabber of stray dogs! Had to go round prowling for unmuzzled pups. Awful, isn't it? And they talk about the beauty of Republican government! Thunder why, if a man like me'd lived over thar in Europe, most any one of them kings'd 'a' jumped at me for to hold the hellum of state. Very likely I'd 'a' been grand duke or a count, or something like that, and lived in a palace.

"But here I am, stuck down in this beastly land as a snatcher of curs! I'm disgusted with such government. I wish Gen'l Washington had died when he was a baby. It's all his fault. I feel's if he ain't treated me right. It's too late to take it out of him, but I warm up those dogs in a way that's awful to see. Let me get my grip on a bull-terrier or a liver-colored setter, and the way I let that animal know how bilious and mad I am is just inhuman. There isn't a dog about the town but wishes to gracious Dan'l Webster and me had been elected. It'd 'a' been meat, and drink, and happiness for them.

"Much obliged for the liniment. But don't you ever run for office. Now, mind me, you'll strike for Senator, and the first thing you know you'll be currying the town scavenger's mules at four dollars a week, and your heart broke. It's the most uncertain thing on earth."

Then Mr. Stump withdrew.

Saw the "Footballers."

Heffelfinger, the famous guard at Yale in the '90s, now a prosperous business man of the West, recently told a story of a countryman who, with his wife, had come down to New Haven to see the "footballers."

The rural one had walked around the stalwart Heffelfinger with an air of critical curiosity, much as he might have surveyed a horse he was about to purchase.

"Sary!" he called to his wife.

"What is it?"

"This feller's nigh on to seven feet, ain't he?"

"Almost, Zachariah."

"Weighs 'bout 220, don't he?"

"I reckon he does."

"Well, well, well!" ejaculated the countryman, "it do beat all how football do develop 'em!"

"He certainly is a fine young man!" said the wife.

"Man!" observed the countryman. "Sary, one of them professors told me hisself that this feller's in his fourth year! I wonder what they feed 'em on!"

Didn't Want Office.

The office seekers were most persistent and unreasonable. An experience that a friend of mine—Mr. F. J. Whipple of New York—had with the President will show how Mr. Lincoln felt about them.

Mr. Whipple called at the White House one day. As he was a little early he had to wait in the hall opposite the President's office. He had not been there long when Mr. Lincoln came in from the private part of the house. Whipple rose, saying:

"This is Mr. Lincoln, I believe."

"Yes. What can I do for you?"

"Nothing, sir. You have not an office I would accept."

Mr. Lincoln slapped him on the shoulder.

"Is it possible! Come into my office. I want to look at you. It is a curiosity to see a man who does not want an office. You might as well try to dip the Potomac dry as to satisfy them all."

They had a few minutes' more conversation, while the President idly made some lines on a paper. A few days later I was in the room with the President, when a prominent Senator called upon him. Seeing a pencil sketch on the desk, the visitor asked what it was.

"It is the portrait of the one man who does not want an office," Mr. Lincoln replied.—Harper's Magazine.

He Caught the Train.

The engineer of a passenger train on the Delaware Valley Railroad carelessly pulled away from Coolbaugh the other day without his conductor. Perhaps he should have noticed that the train was something like 170 pounds lighter, but he is a good deal more of an expert on waits of another sort.

When the conductor happened to look up and notice that the train was gone he was quite vexed. He is not a natural runner—and while he is a train man he has never trained for this particular kind of running. There was nothing to do, however, but to cut loose and chase it.

A stern chase is usually a long one, and the conductor sought to shorten it by whooping like a Choctaw Indian in order to attract the engineer's attention. But the latter official, with one warty hand grasping the throttle and the other clutching the bell cord, was squinting up the line for predatory cows, entirely oblivious of the fact that the unhappy faretaker was wheezing maledictions after him 100 yards away.

And then all at once the sound of that warning yell reached him and he jammed down the brakes. He jammed them down so fiercely that the train stopped with an unexpectedness that caused the conductor to bang into the rear platform in a highly unpleasant manner.

"Ding blame you!" the faretaker roared as he wildly danced about. "Couldn't you get your old train out of the way before I stepped on it?"

Incidentally, it should be stated that the Delaware Valley Railroad, a Pennsylvania corporation, is twelve miles long, and its management has not threatened to reduce the speed of its trains because of the new two-cent passenger rate.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The Automobile Class.

A wealthy New York banker, while visiting his parents in a small town, was stricken with fever. For three months he was confined in the old homestead, dutifully attended by a fond mother and a very zealous doctor.

The banker recovered slowly. One morning he decided that fresh air would do more for him than medical environment, and in a short time he was enabled to dismiss his physician.

When the doctor's bill arrived the banker studied it closely. A few moments later the mother saw her son go to the woodshed, procure an ax, and begin hewing at the hitching post, which had stood in front of the house for fifty years.

"Frank," she shouted, hysterically believing her son in another delirium, "what are you doing?"

"You'll have no further use for it," chuckled the perspiring banker, "hereafter the doctor will come in an automobile."

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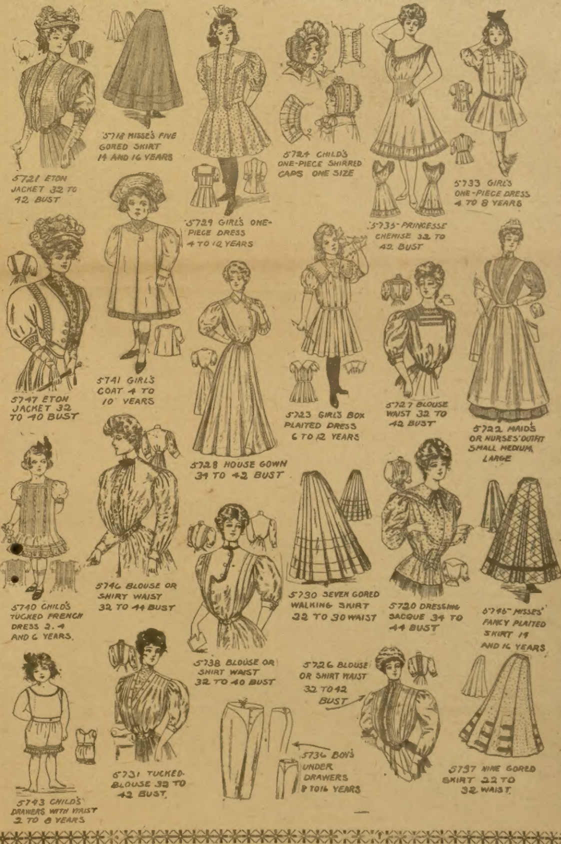
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A dear little girl
Had a snarling bad curl.
A curl that she could not comb out:
Tho' she tried and she tried,
She combed and she cried,
And 'tis said she really did pout!

But the naughty curl
It would not unfurl!
So the little girl said one day:
"The scissors I'll get,
An' then you jus' bet
I'll whack you and throw you away!"

The Mysterious Thief.

"I remember," began grandpa, and when he started that way it meant an interesting story for us boys, for when he was a boy he had moved to the West with his father, after his mother had died, so we gathered our chairs about him, while he continued.

"I remember when I was a boy about 14 years old, and father had to go on his regular trip to the town of Boswick, sixty miles away, for provisions.

"Before he started, he called me to him and said that I couldn't go with him, as I always had before, because we had been losing some sheep, and he wanted me to stay and watch them.

"This was just what I wanted to do, because it was no fun riding on a hard-seated wagon over a rough road all the way. When you got home from one of these trips you felt like being rubbed good with bear grease, and going to bed for a week. This had been the first time father had ever let me stay home alone, for there were many bears and wildcats around.

"After he had gone, I took my gun and loaded it. This gun was a very old one, with a home-made stock. When I had loaded it, I went and looked after the sheep, and in the evening saw that they were put in their pens. I went to bed about 7 o'clock, for I was tired out doing all the work.

"It seemed that I hadn't been in bed ten minutes, when I was awakened by the sheep making an awful noise. I knew that some kind of an animal was around, but little did I think what it was. I got up and took my gun and started for the pens. Going around to the largest one, I saw a large wildcat with one of the sheep.

"When I realized what it was, I took my gun, and fired without aiming, and then started for the cabin. I got inside and locked the door.

"I sat up for the rest of the night, expecting to hear the beast come around the cabin.

"In the morning I went out and found that I had shot it through the heart. I drew it up by the cabin and covered it up with grass to keep it till father came home. When he came next day, and I showed him the wildcat, he said it was the largest he had ever seen. I took the skin to town the next time we went, and traded it for that gun that hangs over the mantel.

"But there is your mother calling us to supper, and I'm very hungry."

This ended grandpa's story, and we went to supper, wishing we could have the good luck to be living where a boy could have a gun and shoot it without a policeman arresting him for it.

A Floating Pin.

Let a drop of water fall upon glass and it will spread, but a drop of mercury will not. This is because the water and the glass have an affinity for each other, so that the water wets the glass, but there is no affinity between mercury and glass. The same principle underlies a pretty experiment that may be made with water and a pin.

Water will wet a pin, but not so readily as it wets glass. Remembering this, we may make a pin, even a big one, float upon the surface of water. There are several ways of doing this. Lay the pin upon the prongs of a fork, and then, holding the fork at an angle of 45 degrees, place it very gently upon the water, watching your opportunity to remove the support.

This may require a little practice, but you will soon be able to succeed, when you will see the water assume a convex form on each side of the pin, and as soon as the pin has replaced enough of the water to counterbalance its weight, it will float like a little boat.

This experiment may be made with a needle, as well as a pin, it being necessary only to place it upon the water so carefully that the water cannot wet it. That may sound like an inconsistency, but it is possible, nevertheless, to so lay the pin or the needle upon the water that it shall not be made wet.

If you find the experiment with the fork only partially successful, try this simpler method: Lay a sheet of cigarette paper evenly upon the water, and upon the paper place a needle or a pin. As soon as the paper gets wet through, it will sink below the surface, leaving the needle or the pin floating. By using great care you might, perhaps, succeed, after a while, in floating a dime or a gold dollar in the same way.

Ants and Spiders as Food.

In some countries the people eat ants. In Sweden they mix them with rye and flavor the stew with brandy. They make a dish of pressed ants and soften it with milk until it looks like our chocolate.

In Africa the children roast large white ants and eat them by the handful like popcorn. Travelers who have eaten them say they taste like almond paste.

Many people cook and eat the locust. They boil them in salty water, roast them in oil or fry them in butter. Sometimes they dry and grind the locusts and make the powder into bread by adding a little water.

The Mexicans are fond of roasted spiders. They also dry the egg of a certain water fly, grind them into flour and sell it by the sack. This flour is sweet and much used for cakes.

These are only a few of the many queer things eaten by the boys and girls of other lands. The children of our own country often eat roasted grasshoppers and say that they taste like parched horse corn or maize.

Nature as a Manufacturer.

Nature is something of a manufacturer herself. In the case of a certain cactus marvelous natural pottery is produced. Woodpeckers excavate nests in the trunk and branches, and to protect itself the plant exudes a sticky juice, which hardens, forming a woody lining to the holes made by the birds, says Indian Review. Eventually the cactus dies and withers away, but the wooden bowls remain.

As a weaver nature also produces fine work. Certain tree barks and leaves furnish excellent cloth, as, for instance, the famous tapa cloth used in the South Sea Islands.

Nature is a glass-maker, too. By discharging her lightning into beds of quartz sand she forms exquisite little pipes of glass.

She makes valuable ropes of various kinds in the shape of tropical vines and creepers, and she is even a lace-maker, as witness the lace tree of the West Indies.

Jimmy's Little Mistake.

"What's the pa and ma question?" asked Jimmy, reading the newspaper.

"Don't know," said his father, looking very much puzzled, "unless it's the question as to who shall have the bringing up of troublesome boys. Why do you want to know?"

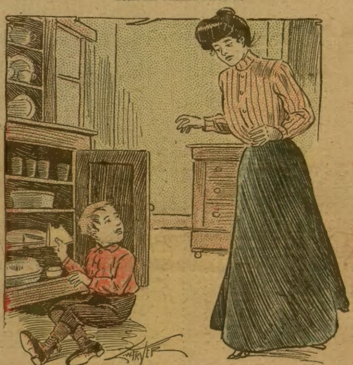
"Why, the paper says President Roosevelt discussed the pa na ma question," said Jimmy.

With His Jackknife.

It was a boy 14 years old who made the first clothespin, and he whittled it out with his jackknife. He was too poor and ignorant to know about patent rights or to protect himself, and a man who saw the clothespin at once took it up, made them by machinery, and in ten years he had cleared over $100,000. More than 700,000,000 clothespins were made in America last year and sent to every country on the globe.

Before their invention women had to use thorns or brass pins to keep the clothes on the lines.

ACCEPTED FATHER'S ADVICE.



"Johnny, doesn't your conscience tell you that you are doing wrong?"
"Yes, mother, but father said I wasn't to believe everything I heard."

All She Knew.

The clergyman was examining the Sunday school and asked the class just in front of him if any of them could tell anything about the Apostle Peter. A little girl raised her hand.

"Come up here, my little lady," said the minister. "I am much gratified to see that you have remembered your lesson. Now, tell the school what you know about Peter."

The little girl was quite willing, and commenced:

"Peter, Peter, pumpkin-eater, had a wife and couldn't keep her, put in a—"

But they never heard where he put her, on account of the general uproar.

Her Lapse of Memory.

Dorothy was begging permission to go and buy some candy, relates the Chicago Tribune.

"You may go, dear," said her aunt, "if you will go straight there and come straight back after you have got it. Do you think you can do that?"

"Sure."

Grabbing the money she started off on a run—and didn't show up again for two hours.

"Aunt Mary," she said, after having endured her austere relative's reproachful look as long as she could stand it, "I forgot twice: goin' and comin'."

The Wish.

"Why do you weep, my darling child?"
The mother Pig did cry.
Her piglet sobbed, "Because I'm wild
To be a Butterfly."

A merry fairy heard. She spake
A word in passing by,
She changed him to a buckwheat cake;
He made the butter fly.

Little Boy's Answer.

Two traveling men were conversing in the lobby of the Auditorium Annex when a little boy, a guest at the hotel, sat down near them, says the Chicago Chronicle. They at once drew him into conversation and listened to his childish opinions. The boy had traveled considerably with his parents and was possessed of much worldly wisdom that amused the drummers. Finally the talk turned to what the child would do when he grew up.

"Wouldn't you like to be a traveling man?" asked one of the men.

"Oh, no!" was the quick answer. "My mamma wants me to be a gentleman."

What Color?

Fred's aunt was taking a kindly interest in teaching her young nephew the colors. She happens to be wearing a gray skirt, and, pointing to it, she asked: "Now, Fred, what color is this?"

Fred (carefully)—Dark white."

Aunt—No: try again.

Fred (decidedly)—Then it must be light black.

Oriole Architects.

One of the best architects in the world is the oriole. Its graceful nest contains four to six whitish eggs with black and brown.